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Finding his signature beat

Hall grad named American Beatbox Champion

See story on page 12



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QUOTE OF NOTE:

“There is a special poetry and magic to hearing a foreign language, whether you fully understand it or not.” - *Pat Clark*

See story page 44

ON THE COVER

Hall High alum Mark Martin competes in the Human Beatbox at the Knitting Factory in Brooklyn where he was named the Solo American Beatbox Champion of 2016.

Photo by Jon Park
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'A magical place'

Connecticut Family Theatre celebrates 10th anniversary

by Mara Dresner
Staff Writer

Joey Fago, Cordie Zito, Bethany Rocktaschel, Kayla Resnisky, Zoe Healey and Kate Sorensen perform in the Connecticut Family Theatre production of "James and the Giant Peach" in January 2016 at the University of Saint Joseph.



Like many organizations celebrating an anniversary, Connecticut Family Theatre is planning a gala. However, it also made a big move to mark the occasion – literally. The theater has recently moved into a new home on South Street.

"We are currently finishing up renovations to make our new building accessible to all and are anticipating a February grand opening, and registrations are now being accepted for our spring session," Artistic Director Lori Solak, a West Hartford resident, said. "We are planning a 10th anniversary celebration on Saturday, March 11, in our new home with hors d'oeuvres, beer and wine, raffles, a silent

auction and live entertainment."

Connecticut Family Theatre, or CFT, started small and has undergone a number of changes in its first decade.

"In 2005, I was hired to run a youth theater program at the Park Road Playhouse in West Hartford. We began with a student base of 45 which, within a year, quickly grew to a student base of 150. Our program became too large to be housed at the Playhouse. Faced with the question, 'Where do we grow from here?' I, along with co-founders Steven Mountzoures, technical director, and Michele Warshaw, costumer, began to explore the possibility of starting our own youth theater company. In November 2006, with hard work

and tremendous support from the families involved in the program, Connecticut Family Theatre was officially incorporated," Solak explained. "Rehearsals for our first production were held in a borrowed space at Hamilton Heights in West Hartford. In the fall of 2007, we moved to a temporary space on Talcott Road in Farmington where we rehearsed for our second production 'Seussical,' and held beginning and intermediate performance classes. In March of 2008 we settled into our new home on Jefferson Avenue in West Hartford where we remained until this past September."

As the group has grown, she said the mission has remained the same.

"The Connecticut Family

Theatre Inc. has been established with the mission to provide theater education and performance opportunities to children of all ages and abilities in a safe, familiar, non-competitive atmosphere. It is our aim to provide an environment that promotes creativity, nurtures the imagination and builds confidence. We welcome and encourage family members and local artists to lend their knowledge, experience and talents in our quest to cultivate a community, a true family theater," she said.

CFT's first show, "Cinderella," which was staged in the spring of 2007, had a cast of 40 students. Now, in an average year, about 300 people, including students, staff and parent volunteers from

throughout Connecticut and Western Massachusetts participate in programs. Offerings include acting classes for all levels, musical theater classes, a teen company, a traveling performance troupe, summer camps and technical theater training. Mainstage productions are performed at the University of Saint Joseph.

"CFT also began a collaboration in 2014 with The Arc of Farmington Valley where individuals with special needs have the opportunity to perform in a full musical once a year," said Solak, who has more than 20 years of theater experience. "Participants are individuals with and without disabilities who work together on a full-scale musical. It is part of our mission to offer opportunities to individuals of all abilities. The impact that this program has on all who are involved is amazing to witness. Our motto for the Favarh program is 'No boundaries. Just possibilities.' Participants reach beyond their limitations and accomplish far more than they thought they could."

CFT produces two mainstage

shows per year, which are cast by audition. Many of the students who perform in the shows also study at CFT. Some students just choose to take classes without performing in the shows. And while for many children, this is a school-time hobby, Solak said, "A large percentage go on to study theater, music theater and theater education at universities throughout the country and abroad."

Whatever their long-range goals, Solak said they form strong bonds with the students.

"We take pride in the fact that the majority of our students have been with us since we first opened our doors. Many who 'graduate' from our programs return to CFT to give back by becoming staff members themselves. These students, who just 10 years ago walked through our doors for the very first time are now wonderful role models and mentors to our newer students now taking their first steps," she said. "Not only are we a place where children can learn about theater, but we are a place where children and their families experience an environment

where they are welcomed, accepted for who they are and, most of all, they are family.

"Our student base and their families are a very close-knit group. We are welcoming and accepting of everyone who walks through our doors," she added. "No new student sits alone for more than a minute or two before one or more of our returning students welcome them into the group. So many of our kids call CFT their second home and refer to their fellow cast mates as their CFT family. And, of course, I always refer to them all as 'my kids.'"

Laura and Vincent Radmore of Simsbury and their two children have been involved with CFT since the fall of 2014.

"For both our 11-year-old son and our 9-year-old daughter, CFT has truly been a gift. CFT is a magical place and the community is like a family," Laura Radmore said. "Lori runs such professional and fun programs that are full of music theater, dance, acting, set creation and stage crew skill-building, but most importantly it builds confidence and



Courtesy photo

"We are welcoming and accepting of everyone who walks through our doors."

-Lori Solak

self-esteem. We have never seen our son happier and more comfortable in his own skin than when we pick him up from CFT rehearsal, week after week. He absolutely loves it and can completely be himself in the non-competitive, supportive, nurturing and creative environment that Lori and Steve have created. Our children have made wonderful friends through the programs and



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it has inspired them to be more involved in the arts."

Radmore said that the school helped her family through a challenging time.

"Our daughter began her first CFT program, Introduction to Acting, in the spring of 2016, and she instantly loved it as much as her brother. She became seriously ill only a few weeks into the class and had to miss the rest of the session. It was a complicated illness involving multiple hospital stays, and one of the first big steps of her recovery was her return to CFT two months later, in a summer camp program. The class was difficult for her upon her return due to her symptoms and Lori gave her so much love, day after day, and built up her confidence in her ability to face her fears and get back on her feet, never letting her give up and helping her persevere and fight for what she loved. This played a huge part in our daughter's recovery," she said. "Lori's skills – as a role model and theater teacher and director – are inspiring and the energy she invests in each child at CFT is truly amazing. She believes in the children

every step of the way and helps them discover their inner strengths and what makes them each unique and special. We don't know how we would have gotten through this difficult time in our lives without the support of Lori and Steve and the CFT community."

Solak said that the new space gives CFT much-needed additional space.

"As our programs have grown over the years, so has the need for more space. We had one 1,600-square-foot studio on Jefferson Avenue which limited our ability to grow any further. We now have a 3,500-square-foot facility which houses two studios and our administrative office," she noted.

The 10th anniversary celebration and move to the new building are bittersweet.

"In October 2015, we were heartbroken with the loss of our beloved co-founder, costumer and dear friend, Michele Warshaw. Our lobby will be dedicated in her memory at our grand opening, The Michele E. Warshaw Memorial Lobby," Solak said. "As Michele was the kindest



Courtesy photo

The cast of the May 2016 production of "Mary Poppins" included Hannah Bricker, Bella Seery, MaryCharlotte Barnes, Jake Yearsley and Olivia Sokale.

and most welcoming person I have ever known, I couldn't think of a better way to honor her. Now all who walk through our doors will know how much she meant to all of us at CFT."

Despite the fact that the South Street location is more than twice the size of the group's previous home, Solak isn't done thinking about more growth.

"Our big dream goal is to have

a performance venue of our own. There is great potential in our gem of a building and we are excited to see where it takes us in the future," she said. "It will take time, planning, hard work and fundraising, but we'll get there." **WHL**

Connecticut Family Theatre is located at 58 South Street. Call 860-992-7764 or visit online at connecticutfamilytheatre.org.

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Beloved villain passes

Local actor Joseph Mascolo played role of Stefano DiMera

by Alicia B. Smith
Associate Editor

The days of Joseph Mascolo's life passed with family, music and a sense of humor and not the intrigue, villainy and backstabbing that he became most known for with his portrayal of the wicked Stefano DiMera on the soap opera "Days of Our Lives."

Mascolo grew up on Levesque Avenue with his parents and younger sister. He graduated from Hall High School in the 1940s planning a career in music but ultimately would end up on stage, in the movies and become best known for his television role.

On December 8 Mascolo, 87, passed away from Alzheimer's disease.

"It's tough to handle because he's my only sibling and we've been around a long time," Mascolo's sister Marie Lavoie said of her brother's passing.

His wife, Patricia Schwartz-Mascolo, his son, Peter, a stepdaughter, Laura Schultz, and five step-grandchildren and three also survive Mascolo.

"He had a terrific sense of humor," Lavoie recalled. "As a teenager he got into a lot of mischief, which included me. He was fun. I could write a book."

... He filled up a room, he was very charismatic, very talented and very smart. When Alzheimer's took him it was the worst thing that could happen to an individual."

Of West Hartford, she said, "He really loved it because he was born and raised there. ... It's got lots of memories and a lot of good restaurants."

Music was a huge part of Mascolo's younger years. He went to United States Military Academy at West Point to play in its band and went on to study music at the University of Miami. It was there that someone suggested he try acting.

He did.

He would go on to study the art under Stella Adler in New York City. In order to make some money while he pursued his studies and sought out roles

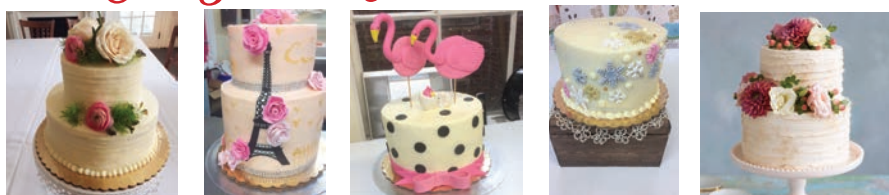
Mascolo played clarinet with the Metropolitan Opera.

"He was very fortunate there, he was able to use his talents," Lavoie said. "It worked out nicely for him."



Photo courtesy of josephmascolo.com

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According to his formal website, josephmascolo.com, he began his acting career in an Off-Broadway production of “The Threepenny Opera.” His Broadway debut was in “Dinner at Eight.” In addition to his theater work, Mascolo would go on to have roles on the big screen in such films as “Diary of a Mad Housewife,” “Jaws 2,” “Shaft’s Big Score!” and “Yes Giorgio.”

When it came to television, Mascolo has the distinction of being the only character to appear on “All in the Family” who dared to sit in protagonist Archie Bunker’s beloved chair. Other television work includes appearances in a variety of series including “Kojak,” “Hill Street Blues” and “Lou Grant.” Mascolo would go on to land the role that fans would come to know him by the most.

In 1982 he made his debut as Stefano DiMera, a role he initially turned down when approached by the then writer of “Days of Our Lives,” Pat Falcon-Smith. Mascolo did not want to be tied down by a contract.

He would stay with the show for 18 years.

Fans came to know him as an Italian mob boss-like character who terrorized his enemies, going so far as to commit murder. His character was tough, dallied in

on it, a symbol of the death-life cycle his character endured through the years.

His role would win him the title of Outstanding Villain having been nominated through the years for several Daytime Emmy Awards.

“He filled up a room, he was very charismatic, very talented and very smart.”

–Marie Lavoie

international terrorism, suffered a brain tumor, was taken hostage, got pushed out a window by a woman supposedly possessed by a demon, struck by lightning, survived a heart attack and ultimately ended up in a wheelchair after suffering a stroke. The character died in January 2016, but it would not be the first time. DiMera always wore a ring with a symbol of a Phoenix

Soap Opera Digest named him Favorite Villain.

“That was not his real character,” Lavoie stressed. “It needed a strong personality and that is what he had.”

Lavoie said his family’s strong Italian ties influenced her brother when he developed the character of DiMera. Both their parents – Peter and Anna – were Italian immigrants.

Throughout his career, Mascolo would continue to work in theater and would also have a role on the soap opera “The Bold and the Beautiful.”

Lavoie, who lives in California, said she and her family would go to see her brother on stage whenever they could. She would occasionally catch up with her brother’s daytime show when her schedule would permit.

“If I was off during the week I would turn it on. His voice was so distinct, as soon as I heard it I would go watch it,” she said.

“His personal life was good, it was very different” from his screen persona, Lavoie said. She explained that his first wife passed away from cancer and he remained single for a long time, supported by family and friends before remarrying.

When his illness required he receive care at a facility, Lavoie said her brother got the best care to ensure he was comfortable in his West Coast home in California. [WHL](#)

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Sally & Bob's

New owners plan to keep the old favorites on menu

by Alicia B. Smith
Associate Editor



For two weeks Rhonda and Ronnie Zieky helped the new owners Cesar Contreras and Helen Brower learn the ropes before heading into full retirement. The Ziekys owned Sally and Bob's Eatery for more than 30 years.

While he was waiting for his take-out order, a customer noticed Rhonda Zieky seated at a table.

"How do you feel?" he inquired. "Weird," Rhonda Zieky's responded.

It was no surprise Rhonda Zieky felt a bit odd. She was just days away from retiring after owning and operating the business she and her husband, Ronnie Zieky, ran for 33 years: Sally and Bob's Eatery.

Technically on this day, the couple did not own the restaurant – Helen Brower and her husband, Cesar Contreras, became owners in the beginning of December. However, the Ziekys agreed to stay on for two weeks as the new owners got their feet under them, learning the menu and the day-to-day operations.

It was also an opportunity to say goodbye to some longtime customers, many who came in to say farewell with compliments, flowers, well wishes and tears.

Rhonda Zieky said it was the customers she was going to miss the most. As she figures it, the business is on its third generation of families who have been coming to the North Main

Street diner to grab a bite to eat.

"It was good; we always had wonderful customers," Ronnie Zieky said.

"They were so nice," he said. "I don't know if they came here because of us or the food," he said, jokingly.

The eatery's story begins in 1962 with the business' namesake Sally and Bob Dworetsky who had moved to Connecticut from New York to open a business here. The couple

The couple ran the business until 1983 when they turned over the reins to Rhonda and Ronnie Zieky.

Bob Dworetsky continued to work in the business for a few years before retiring for good, helping show his daughter and son-in-law the ropes.

The Ziekys did something similar for Brower and Contreras, working as assistants as the new owners adjusted.

Brower and Contreras both have

Thus far, Brower has taken care of serving tables while Contreras is at the grill. Like the previous owners, they are learning as they go.

"We learned as we went," Ronnie Zieky said of starting in the business.

Many customers watched the Zieky children grow up – all working in the restaurant. The couple noted they got to serve a third generation of customers as some of their first customers have had children who bring their children for a bite to eat.

Ronnie Zieky believes the restaurant is one of oldest – if not the oldest – restaurant in the Center.

"They came and went," he said of other eateries.

"We endured," Rhonda Zieky added.

Ronnie Zieky noted, too, they are the only restaurant in the Center that still has free parking.

Over time they have seen more restaurants come to the Center, especially after the construction of Blue Back Square.

At the suggestion of their landlord, the couple closed for six months 11 months ago to repaint and update the restaurant

The Ziekys decided to retire in April 2015, following a visit from their children, who had traveled north.

"We've both been in the business for so long we wanted to have something of our own."

–Helen Brower

owned a deli in Hartford, which was forced to close due to the redevelopment of the neighborhood. When the Dworetsky's learned that there was a small diner in West Hartford for sale, they took a chance and bought the business in 1969.

"He had a waitress that came with the place; they learned together," their daughter Rhonda Zieky said of her parents making the change from deli to diner. "It was a tiny little grill. They had a great time."

20 years in the restaurant business – Brower serving tables and Contreras in the kitchen, primarily in other local restaurants including Effie's Place and the Gold Roc Diner.

"We've both been in the business for so long we wanted to have something of our own," Brower said.

The new owners are planning to keep the menu and add a few specials of their own. They have also expanded the Saturday hours and will now open on Sundays, too.

"It happened and we were happy," Rhonda Zieky said of the decision.

The one thing the Ziekys said they would miss is their customers.

"They were just nice people," Ronnie Zieky said.

He was usually the one behind the counter at the grill. He said that he had so many regulars through the years that as soon as he saw them walk in the door he would get their usual meal started before they said a word.

"If they changed their mind I was in trouble," Ronnie Zieky said, jokingly.

He said his key to cooking for more than 30 years was to add a pinch of this or a pinch of that, never measuring anything.

When the couple planned their opening menu, they used recipes for things they enjoyed, mixing in some old family recipes. Fried matzah became a customer favorite. When Brower and Contreras took over, Ronnie Zieky said there was one stipulation, "You cannot go in without making the fried matzah."

After a few lessons, Contreras

felt confident in his ability to make it, saying, "Ronnie taught me well."

"They've been amazing," Brower added of Rhonda and Ronnie Zieky.

The new owners live in West Hartford and their son, Alessandro, attends local schools.

Brower grew up in New York State and came to Connecticut to attend the University of Hartford where she earned a degree in sociology. She liked Connecticut and decided to stay. She met her husband while working as a waitress. Contreras is originally from Mexico City, Mexico.

"Everyone is so nice" and everything was going well, Brower said a couple of weeks after buying the restaurant.

"They make you feel like family," she said of the support they have received from customers and neighboring businesses. "It helps us, makes us feel comfortable."

The couple is getting to know many of the Sally and Bob's regulars and have also seen several familiar faces from the other places they have worked.

While its hard work, Brower

said she has always enjoyed getting to know her customers – learning about them and their families, and having friendships develop over time.

The couple wakes up at 4 a.m. and are in the restaurant an hour later. The restaurant opens at 6 a.m. and closes at 3 p.m. – in time for them to get their son at school and take him to his after-school activities.

"We are so happy Rhonda and Ronnie really made it happen for us," Brower said.

"They believe in us," Contreras said.

As for turning over their long-run business to someone new, they have no trepidations.

"We're lucky to have Helen and Cesar coming in," Ronnie Zieky said.

"I think they have the right personality and know how," added Rhonda Zieky.

"We want to wish Helen and Cesar the very best, I know they will succeed," she said. "We wish them all the luck in the world."

Upon retiring the Ziekys planned to visit their children and



Photos by Alicia B. Smith

New owners Helen Brower and her husband, Cesar Contreras, are ready to serve up some great food at Sally and Bob's Eatery.

grandchildren. Ronnie Zieky then had knee replacement surgery scheduled, after which they intend to travel more. **WHL**

Sally and Bob's, 10 North Main Street, is open 6 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Friday and 6 to 11:30 a.m. on Saturday. For more information, call 860-236-5392 or visit online at sallyandbobs.com.

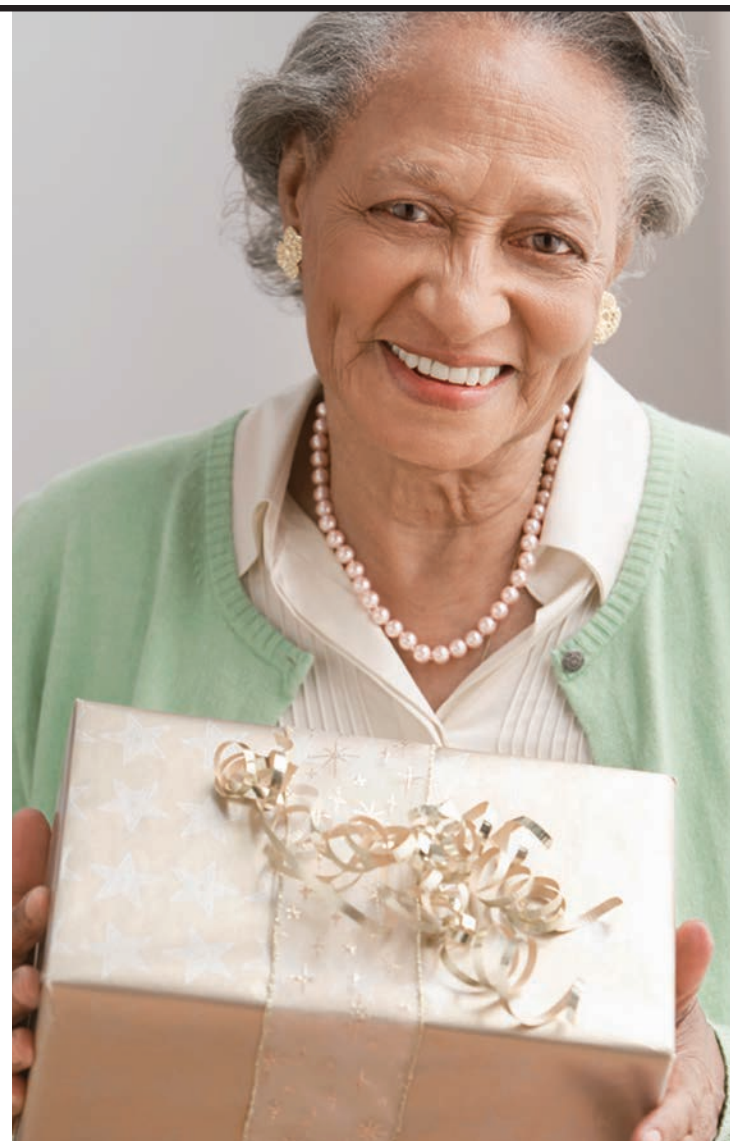
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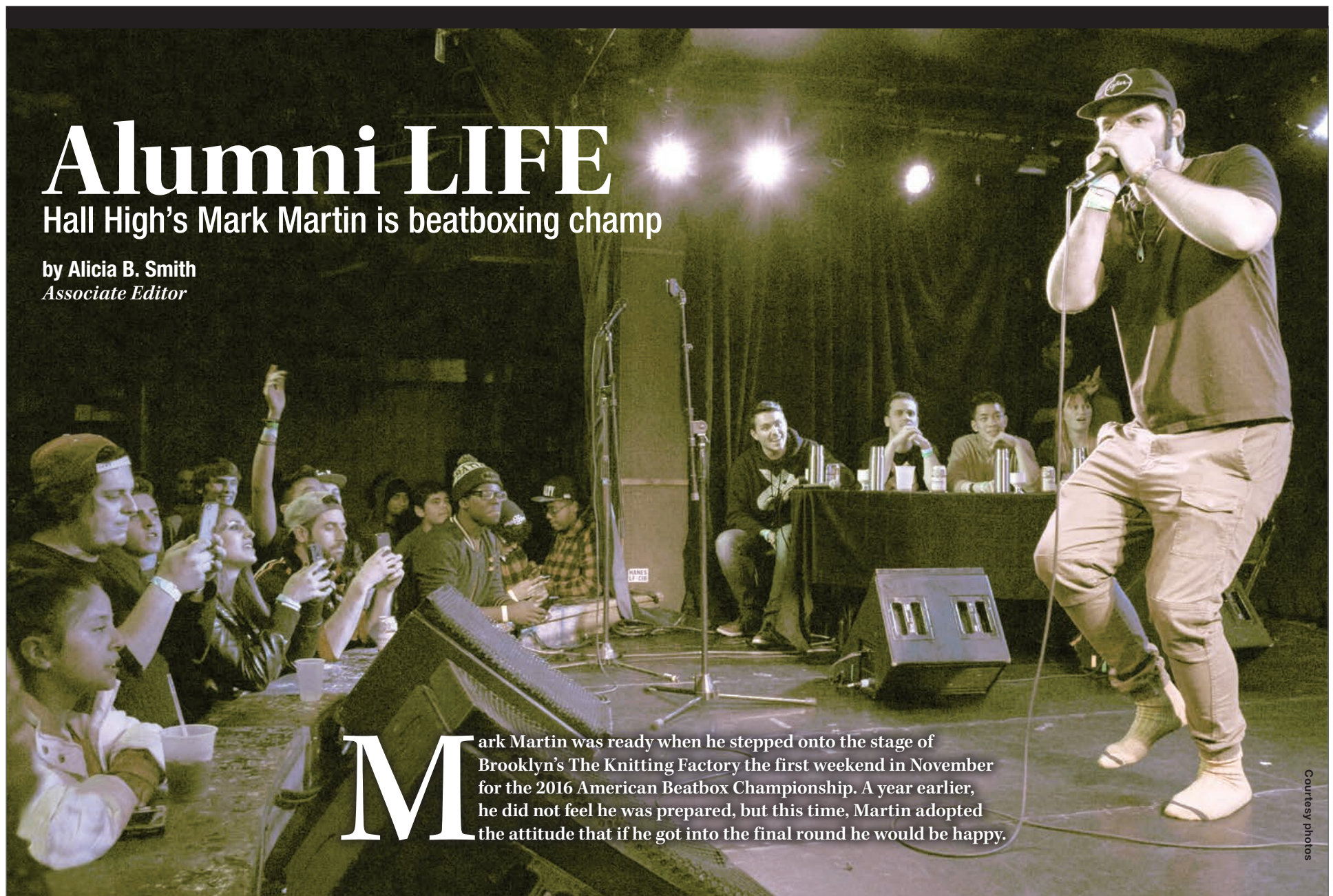
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Alumni LIFE

Hall High's Mark Martin is beatboxing champ

by Alicia B. Smith
Associate Editor



Mark Martin was ready when he stepped onto the stage of Brooklyn's The Knitting Factory the first weekend in November for the 2016 American Beatbox Championship. A year earlier, he did not feel he was prepared, but this time, Martin adopted the attitude that if he got into the final round he would be happy.

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"The competition was tough," he recalled.

In the first round Martin said he felt like he was able to get the crowd on his side. In round two he felt he was more powerful and for the third go around he relied on his personal style.

"The crux for me was I have a signature beat. I do my style, that's what I did against him, I got the crowd excited," he said of his competition against Villain, a performer from Pittsburgh.

In the finals Martin opted to freestyle two different songs.

"There are some people who are really fast and do crazy sounds. For me, what I am more focused on, from my time at Hall and King Philip, is years of mix experience. I am more about creating music and a groove as a way to build routine."

His strategy worked.

Martin also noticed that his teachers would talk to each other, not in words, but in sounds, musically stringing together sounds reflecting the style their students were learning.

"I thought it was really cool," Martin recalled.

Additionally, at the time, he was listening to an eclectic range of music from jazz to Will Smith along with some heavy metal.

Putting all of this together Martin said he created his first beatboxing recording in eighth grade.

Playing jazz, singing and even arranging music, Martin said, "created a perfect storm as far as noise and music rhythm, playing bass, I was playing it like a drum."

When he got to Hall High School, Class of 2007, he continued in the Concert Jazz Band and

"With these battles, it's not about doing crazy stuff, it's really about being yourself, being original, being present and commanding the space of the room while communicating your ideas."

—Mark Martin

By the time he and the other finalist made it to an overtime round, Martin said he was nervous but was able to calm himself down and focus.

"He went crazy, really fast. I did a very simple groove that was powerful; the crowd went nuts; that synched the victory," he said.

Martin was crowned the Solo American Beatbox Champion of 2016. His team, Power Couple, also won second place in the team category. Out of 110 competitors at the event, Martin was among the 16 finalists.

Martin began honing his craft during middle and high school where he was in the jazz band. He began playing bass in seventh grade while a student at King Philip Middle School; he was also in different choirs.

"What I loved about jazz is about how it's so vocal, so communicative. There is always an aspect of instruments speaking to each other. What I really fell in love with is the groove and feel," Martin said.

joined the Chorilears, where the instructor incorporated a number of different experimental singing techniques and sounds.

"It really always culminated in Pops 'n Jazz, really the performance experience that really tied together and made everything so powerful and connected. That was a real experience. [It was] life changing."

Martin also said he appreciated the performing experience afforded him in high school, which inspired him to try new things. And he appreciates his Spanish teachers, especially when he had the opportunity to travel. Spanish, he said, was one of the most useful things he learned.

Martin credits his music teachers including Joe Ganci, Lorri Cetto, John Mastroianni, Marc Kaplan and Haig Shahverdian.

"At the time I didn't know beatboxing was a thing, it was me expressing myself musically," he said.

While beatboxing is an element of hip hop, Martin said it



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A graduate of King Philip Middle School and Hall High School, Mark Martin credits his many music and choral teachers for their instruction and creativity which helped him succeed in the world of beatboxing.

was jazz that inspired him and where he began to notice elements of beatboxing and include it in his own work.

Martin explained that beatboxing derived from hip hop as an imitation of drums and different sounds, which evolved to drum machines, which were first called beatboxes.

“Once you imitate those sounds, you can create your own sounds. You scat with certain sounds like a drum set; the letters P, T, K – you put them together and imitate those drum sounds. From there you can also learn roles – short bursts of certain letters. In a way, it’s like talking,” he explained.

“I got into it in New York. We

would put down a groove and they would freestyle that and sing over the groove,” Martin said. “It’s similar to the way you would scat or a cap-pella. With scat, for example, you are loosely imitating a sound. From there it’s like scatting or for me it’s from my years of jazz. It’s completely improvisational. It becomes a language.”

Martin described the history of beatboxing saying the art form developed from hip hop culture that was born in the Bronx in the late 1970s and early ’80s. He said there were five elements: graffiti, break dancing, emceeing, and rapping and beatboxing. As hip hop became more commercial and the live, spontaneous elements faded, rap became more popular.

“Once it started selling CDs, beatboxing disappeared, you could record an actual beat,” Martin said.

Recently as the demand for live music has increased, Martin said beatboxing began making a comeback.

“It’s become a very powerful community; it’s one of the things I love,” Martin said.

Martin attended New York University where he developed his own major for beatboxing and language, and earned a minor in business. While a student he immersed himself in the beatbox world including performing at local venues as well as on the streets.

“Beatboxing is a very vulnerable art form,” he said. “If rapping or singing, I can hide behind my words. As a beatboxer, I hear if you feel what you are doing, I can hear if you practiced, I can hear what you are trying to do. It becomes an almost spiritual event. It’s very revealing; it’s very honest. Someone’s real voice comes through.”

After college Martin spent time touring with The Voca People, a musical theater group that performed a show on aliens who speak in music. Martin had the role of the captain of the alien ship. He toured with the group for five years, traveling internationally through Europe, Southeast Asia, North and South America and the Middle East.

After leaving the group Martin and his girlfriend have spent the last year developing a therapy program, working in the Lavelle School for the Blind in the Bronx where he teaches beatboxing to the school’s students with the BEAT Rockers program.

Attending the World Champion and international events inspires Martin. While the performers may not speak the same language, they can communicate through their different styles and grammar.

Martin credits his recent success with just being himself.

“With these battles, it’s not about doing crazy stuff, it’s really about being yourself, being original, being present and commanding the space of the room while communicating your ideas,” he said.

These days Martin is focused on teaching, performing and collaborating with other artists, including the head of Yale University’s guitar department, Ben Verdery.

Martin’s parents, Lisa and Richard Martin, still live in West Hartford and he does come home now and then.

One day would like to visit and perform in local schools.

“I like to give back, show that I have been able to do while focusing on the music and creative things,” Martin said. **WHL**

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Photo by Lynn Woike

Historical stories

Program summons characters from West Hartford's past

by Lynn Woike
Editor

What happens when Madame Elaine, a spirit medium from the 19th century, throws a dinner party?

You get Tales from the Table, the newest program at The Noah Webster House and West Hartford Historical Society.

Information about many of West Hartford's dearly departed residents collected by The Noah Webster House and West Hartford Historical Society gets used for the annual Halloween Haunting.

"We did all this research for the haunting series, but all we can focus on there was their death. We have so much more to tell. This program is a chance for us to tell the story of their lives," said society Executive Director Jennifer DiCola Matos.

"We wanted to retell these stories in a different setting so we could portray the warmth of a life lived in West Hartford. You'll hear a different story than you would at Hauntings. It's going to be very humorous," she said.

There will be a certain amount of improv involved as characters from different time periods interact with the audience. Each character will be summoned by Madame Elaine, a 19th century spiritualist.

"The premise is she's communicating with these people," Matos explained.

Artistic Director and friend of the Noah Webster House Suzanne Sayers incorporates real West Hartford history for this unique dinner experience. Guests will visit with a Revolutionary Era surgeon and soldier, long-time West Hartford gravedigger Henry Kalber and an unlikely

At the first rehearsal for Tales from the Table, Ellery Dressler plays the role of Pearl Ogden, pointing out to Mrs. Griswold, played by Robin Brennan, where she ran her wagon over Benjamin Bishop.

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Image courtesy of The Noah Webster House and West Hartford Historical Society

team driver named Pearl Ogden. Their stories span centuries, and only Madame Elaine can summon them forth using her crystal ball.

Spiritualism – the belief that the living are able to communicate with spirits – started around 1850 and quickly became a fad. In America, spiritualism gained popularity after the Civil War in which most Americans had lost at least one family member. Practicing spiritualism was an attempt to see their loved ones had made it safely to the other side. Séances, planchettes, tarot cards, palm readings and crystal balls were all in vogue. At its height at the end of the 19th century, it's estimated that spiritualism had more than eight million followers in America and Europe, Sayers said.

Spiritualism was associated mainly with ladies of the middle and upper classes. Notable followers included Elizabeth Barrett

Browning, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Mary Todd Lincoln, and Queen Victoria. According to information provided by the historical society, many of its followers were Protestant Christians who viewed spiritualism as a complement to Christianity rather than contrary to it. Many of the same advocates for the abolition of slavery and women's suffrage were Spiritualists.

However, by the turn of the century, the prevalence of fraudulent mediums damaged the credibility of informal spiritualism and formal organizations and associates began to form. In a 1904 edition of the Hartford Courant, no less than nine mediums offered their services under the heading "Clairvoyants." In "Geer's Hartford City Directory" from 1903, 12 clairvoyants are listed by name and address.

"It begs the question: is Madam Elaine a fraud or the real deal? Guests will have to come to their own conclusion," Sayers said.

Tales from the Table will take place on Saturday, February 25,

with a 6 p.m. and an 8 p.m. seating.

Attendees will be introduced to Dr. Timothy Hosmer, a Revolutionary War surgeon assigned to the encampment in the woods along the Metropolitan District's Reservoir 6 where the rare remains of a camp were found, and one of his patients, an unnamed French soldier.

In 1778, about 1,000 of General George Washington's troops, under the command of General Israel Putnam, camped on this site after the Battle of Saratoga. It was reported in the Connecticut Courant that soldiers had marched from the North Meadows of Hartford "to the West Division, about six miles from their former encampment" on Sunday, November 15, 1778. They left November 21 for Danbury.

After the troops left, the site was used as a temporary Army hospital. Records show that the sick from the Harford camp were brought to the West Hartford camp, and when recovered, the soldiers were then brought to

This ad ran in the Hartford Courant March 30, 1904.

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Danbury. Dr. Timothy Hosmer, the son of West Hartford's Stephen Hosmer, had been assigned the West Division's hospital surgeon. The "hospital" was large – with as many as 80 sick or wounded patients documented. Among the sick were some French soldiers who had come to Connecticut among the ranks of French General Rochambeau's army. A boulder, with a memorial inscription to the French soldiers who died while in West Hartford, stands in the town's Old Center Cemetery.

Guests will learn from Hosmer and his nameless French patient about the medical techniques used during that time.

Madame Elaine will also summon Pearl Ogden. While she is a rather unknown character in the town's history, the man she hit with her carriage who later died was well-known: Benjamin S. Bishop. According to the Courant, Bishop was "one of the best known of the older residents of the [town], having served the town in many public ways..." His obituary cites the incident with young Pearl Ogden stating,

"Mr. Bishop was run into by a team some months ago and knocked down. Not fully recovering from the effect of the accident, he had a shock in the summer and when about to retire on Sunday night, he had another shock which caused his death in a few hours."

Matos said there is no knowing what the shocks were that he suffered, but that it's easy to imagine the guilt a young lady like Miss Ogden would have felt after reading his death. The article about the accident states that she, "came driving carelessly down the street with some companions" and "Mr. Bishop was knocked down, the wheels going over him and bruising him severely, but breaking no bones."

Another historical person to be summoned is Henry Kalber, the town's gravedigger. According to information provided by the historical society, he was born in Saxony, Germany in 1840 and immigrated to the United States in 1867. His wife, Barbara, was born in Bavaria, Germany in 1847 and emigrated in 1866. In 1896, they purchased a house and lot at 15 New Park

Dana Gordon as an unnamed French soldier and John Droney as Dr. Timothy Hosmer practice their roles.




Photo by Lynn Wolk

Avenue, on the corner of what would become Darcy Street. The couple had 14 children. Although Henry Kalber was a German immigrant, it was noted that he was able to speak, read and write English. His position as gravedigger for the town of West Hartford required working six months of the year, and it is in this capacity that he communes with Madam Elaine. "Geer's Hartford City Directory" suggests that Henry worked as a filer for one of factories located in Elmwood during the other six months of the year.

The program that brings them all together is a dinner theater experience, with the meal catered by Café Louise. Under Sayer's direction, local volunteer actors including Robin Brennan, Mark Fitton, Dana Gordon, John Droney, Ellery Dressler and Sheryl Simoni will play the roles of these deceased residents whose spirits have been summoned.

Space is limited and tickets must be purchased in advance. For more information, including the menu, visit online at www.noahwebster.yapsody.com or call 860-521-5362. **WHL**



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Photo by Lynn Woike

Partners in Poetry

Women meet for 16 years, focus on their words

by Lynn Woike
Editor

Twice a month, eight poets gather at the West Hartford home of Nancy Kerrigan. Four others are from town, with members also coming from Hamden, Canton and Manchester. The evening gatherings, which can stretch to three hours, are sacred to all of them – so important that they have not allowed the friendships that formed to deter them from their writing.

They've gone on self-guided summer poetry retreats, to the Dodge Poetry Festival in Newark and to the Massachusetts Poetry Festival in Salem, always maintaining their meetings every other week to critique poems.

On a January evening, there was tea and homemade zucchini bread in the kitchen, and plates of sweets in front of the fire in the living room. Settled comfortably into familiar

seats in a living room, each woman read her piece. The others followed along on their copies, which they were emailed a couple of days earlier.

Then, they went around the circle again, this time, with one woman listening while another recited her poem aloud and members discussed it. They talked about cadence and imagery, questioning the order of lines or the choice of a word.

"I love the repetition."

"One phrase builds on another."

"That stanza is the hinge."

"The language was very simple, but very haunting."

"My favorite line is 'The moon is the lamp in the ceiling.'"

"What is the poem asking us to consider?"

"It's fun to read."

"I'm not sure about the title and the first stanza."

Not everyone agreed about everything.

Each woman wrote notes on her copy and, at the end of the discussion, passed it to the author who then had the opportunity to speak.

The process takes longer, but, Joan Hofmann noted, "It gives us a little distance from the poem so we can maybe have a better judgment."

"I joined a group because I wanted to learn how to write poetry that was both accessible and good. I have learned more from the women in this group than I ever learned in classrooms," Kerrigan said.

One of the things she said she learned was "to put a line in that I know that they will eliminate."

"By workshopping the poems, you see whether they work, whether others are getting the message or getting the intent of the poem. If you just read it to yourself, of course you know what it means," Julia Paul said.

Ginny Lowe Connors, a former

Partners in Poetry have been meeting since 2000. They are, from left, (seated) Pat Hale, Julia Paul, Ginny Lowe Connors, Sherri Bedingfield, (standing) Nancy Kerrigan, Christine Beck, Elaine Zimmerman and Joan Hofmann.

town poet laureate, said it's helpful to hear someone else read the poem, and the level of trust among their peers makes it possible to share a draft of a poem to get help in the revision process.

More than one member said that, as she wrote, in her head she could hear the voices of another women in the group guiding her.

"There is a very strong focus on each person's work. The depth analysis is very strong, and relentless. It's very honest," Elaine Zimmerman said, adding, "It's a serious group of serious writers aiming for excellence."

She'd been part of a writer's group in Middletown that didn't last.

When a playwright member mentioned one in West Hartford, the two came to check it out. The playwright is no longer with the group, and Zimmerman now has a job in Boston, but she still comes to the



Nancy Kerrigan reads her poem to the group.

meetings. The group modified its schedule to accommodate her.

Kerrigan, who hosts the gatherings, began taking college classes to learn more about poetry, eventually finding her way to Wesleyan University.

"Poetry has been sort of an old age affair for me. My back-

ground is as a clinician and psychotherapist and every time things got too stressful, I would turn to poetry," she said.

It was at Wesleyan that she met Christine Beck, the town's current poet laureate.

"After a long career practicing and then teaching law, I turned

to poetry in the year 2000," Beck said. "Actually, I wasn't sure I wanted to write poetry. I had enrolled in the weeklong Writers' Conference at Wesleyan, intending to take workshops in fiction as well as poetry. In the poetry workshop, I saw a woman who looked familiar but didn't figure out who she was until I saw her name on a book in the bookstore. It was Ginny Connors, my daughter's English teacher. She told me she had met two other women at the conference who were interested in starting a poetry writing and workshop group. Was I interested? From that meeting, we began what we named Partners in Poetry – the PIPs."

Tere Foley was the other initial member.

"We began to invite friends," Beck said. "Before long, we were up to eight members."

Sherri Bedingfield, Pat Hale and Zimmerman joined, followed by Paul and, last year, Hofmann.

"Our only male member,

Poetry events

February 14

Poet Laureate Christine Beck will read at the Senior Center in Bishops Corner at 1 p.m.

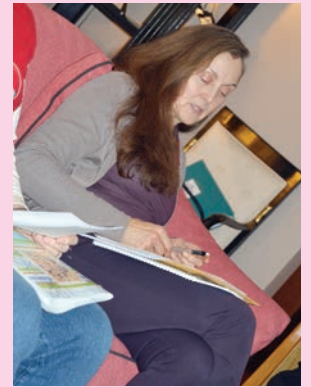
March 9

The book "Forgotten Women" will be launched at the Riverwood

Poetry Series beginning at 7 p.m. at the Universalist Church at 433 Fern Street in West Hartford.

May 9

In her last official engagement, Poet Laureate Christine Beck invites the public to share a favorite poem. The event begins at 6:30 p.m. in the meeting room at Noah Webster Library. All ages are welcome. Registration is suggested by calling 860-561-6990.



Jean Hofmann reads her poem to the group.

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Excerpts from poems to appear in “Forgotten Woman”

She was honored, she knew,
lying in a bathtub, pretending
to be dead, drowned for love.
Who wouldn't want to play Ophelia?
Who wouldn't want to be painted
as the woman Hamlet loved

Poem: “Honored” by Christine Beck
Forgotten Woman: Elizabeth Siddal, 1829-1862

You sat there dignified in your cloth coat
with your hat on, staring out of that bus window.
Were you planning dinner under that hat,
plotting to change history, or just plain tired?

Poem: “For the Women Who Ride Buses”
by Nancy Kerrigan
Forgotten Woman: Rosa Parks

she took her paints outside and proved herself
to the Academy.
Few women did that in her day. An artist born
to live her life
out loud renamed herself twice. From Lena,
to Lenore,
from Lenore, to Lee. Then Lee for life.
A born artist, her colors spread wild across
the air, across
huge canvases the world could witness.

Poem: “Lee Krasner, Artist Forgotten,”
by Sherri Bedingfield

She will leave behind one ring and a
pair of brown shoes. Nothing else.
No one will close her eyes or
walk with her when she dies.

Poem: “Photo in Krakow,” by Elaine Zimmerman
Forgotten Woman: A mother in a Krakow photo

My father's mother holds a rattlesnake,
caught and killed not three feet from their
back door,
out by the clothesline where she hangs
the sheets.

Poem: “In this Photograph Taken
in Arizona,” by Pat Hale
Forgotten Woman: Grace Marguerite Hale

Irena drops Elzbieta's name
into the jar, slides the jar
behind rows of canned pickles
and cabbages. If the Gestapo
search, would they care what's
in a woman's pantry?

Poem: “The Jar,” by Julia Paul
Forgotten Woman: Irena Sendler, 1910-2008

You asked for world peace but
on your birthday you get
a saffron yellow woven silk wrap

Poem: “Worn Skeins,” by Joan Hofmann



Photo by Lynn Wolke

Elaine Zimmerman (left) follows along as her poem is read by Julia Paul.

Bob Jacob, died in 2013,” Beck explained. “Tere Foley had to drop out due to family obligations. Otherwise, we have remained a cohesive group.”

While they are all white women older than 60, diversity can be found in writing styles, occupations, backgrounds and interests.

“It makes the work more textured and the feedback more compelling,” Beck said.

“Also, writing can be really a lonely thing, just sitting in your house, writing,” Hale said. “It's really good to get feedback and to be around people who care about the same things that you care about.”

Nearly all of them have written at least one book of poetry – in some cases, two – during their years together. Four have been named poets laureate: Beck and Connors in West Hartford, Paul in Manchester and Hofmann in Canton.

“That is not a coincidence,” members agree.

In 2009, the group published a book of their poems, “Everybody Says Hello.”

Paul is the president of Riverwood Poetry Series, a monthly poetry reading on social justice themes at the Universalist Church.

Bedingfield, Beck and Hofmann serve as board members. Last year, they sponsored a reading about forgotten women. That inspired Connors – who owns her own small poetry press, Grayson Books, which publishes poetry anthologies, collections, and chapbooks by some of America's most talented poets – to solicit poems for an anthology called

Poetry Series held at the Universalist Church, 433 Fern Street in West Hartford. All the Connecticut poets will have the opportunity to read their poems published in the anthology. Audience members will have an opportunity to read a poem; while it's encouraged that it be in keeping with the theme of forgotten women, it is not required.

“I have learned more from the women in this group than I ever learned in classrooms.”

–Nancy Kerrigan

“Forgotten Women.”

Although she knew it “would be a great collection,” Connors said, “I didn't stop to think, ‘This is going to be an awful lot of work.’”

All the PIPs submitted poems for consideration. From the 500 received, 50 were chosen. Of those, 14 were from Connecticut including all the PIPs.

“We were all thrilled to have a poem chosen,” Beck said.

The book will be launched March 9 at the Riverwood

“Being a part of the PIPs has challenged me to improve my writing and to become a better reader of poetry. We have overcome one of the biggest obstacles to an effective writers group, which is to become friends and turn into a social group. We are friends, but we are also committed to our process and determined to keep writing and revising better poems. In this aspect, I count us as a highly successful writers group. We have the ‘legs’ [meaning years] to prove it,” Beck said. **WHL**

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EDUCATION



Courtesy photos

Support our schools

Parents and community members have role to play in helping schools

by Rachel Lombardi
Intern

While the amount of money designated for school budgets might seem astronomical, there are always items that either aren't covered in the budget or are needed for extra-curricular activities.

Taryn Dawson, a kindergarten teacher at Emerson-Williams Elementary School in Wethersfield, is one of many teachers who spend

their own money on school supplies and materials.

"I want my classroom to feel like a safe, secure and comfortable learning atmosphere for my kindergarteners," she said. "To accomplish that I have spent my own money on furniture, materials and supplies."

Dawson also uses online outlets such as donorschoose.org to earn funds for classroom materials. The site allows teachers to post a project describing what they need for their

classrooms.

Anyone, from community members to businesses around the world, can help fund the projects.

"DonorsChoose is a simple way to get the community involved with providing materials for classrooms. It's quick and easy for teachers and rewarding for donors and students, so it's a win-win," Dawson said.



"DonorsChoose grants can help provide the basics or provide the materials for a teacher's brand-new idea. It fills a unique niche in education funding because it looks at the needs and desires of an individual classroom."

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EDUCATION

Dawson noted that she's had projects funded ranging from simple white card stock to a Cameo Silhouette cutting machine.

Susan Kopecki, a 27-year art teacher at Highcrest Elementary School in Wethersfield, said that she found DonorsChoose while searching on the Internet for opportunities for classroom grants.

"I love to look for different opportunities for educators, and I'm always looking for ways to make me a better teacher," Kopecki said. "I encourage others to look over the site and take the time. It's a wonderful opportunity to make the classroom a better place."

Since Kopecki became a teacher

member of DonorsChoose in 2009, she has been awarded more than 40 classroom projects, including a Mac desktop and laptop, classroom screen, tablets, bamboo drawing pads, art materials, books and supplies.

"It's been a great way to bring new and updated technology into the classroom," she said. "DonorsChoose provides endless opportunities for educators to enrich their classroom and provide their students with amazing opportunities. It is important for the community to see what options there are out there to support educators and their students."

Teachers also use a variety of ways to promote their projects.

Jackie Corricelli, a math teacher at Conard High School in West Hartford, said teachers and supporters could promote and share the project pages through email, Facebook and other forms of social media.

"Once your project is up on DonorsChoose, it's important to market it, too," Corricelli said. "The community and thoughtful citizens can make a huge difference for funds. Teachers shouldn't feel like they are alone because there are people out there willing to help."

Megan Foley, a first-grade teacher at Emerson-Williams Elementary School, said that through the website, teachers can find companies willing to match every donation. Once a proj-

ect is funded, teachers must send a thank you note and photos of the students using the materials to demonstrate how their support made an impact in the classroom.

She noted that adoptaclassroom.org is another online source to obtain funds for the classroom. With AdoptAClassroom, teachers do not have to post every material they need for the classroom. Instead, money is given to the classroom and teachers can pull from the funds when materials are needed.

Library partners

New books, technology and other multi media materials are generally funded through a school district's



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budget but organizations, such as parent committees or local libraries, can provide additional activity funds.

"The superintendent, principal and board of education understand that students need access to great reading materials," said Leslie Poulos, library media specialist at Silas Deane Middle School in Wethersfield.

Poulos said that the middle school has also teamed up with the Wethersfield Public Library in the past to host special events, such as author talks. She added that parents and the community are always welcome to reach out to the library. Parent can even sign up to volunteer at middle school library events.

"Librarians are the best people; not only do they improve and increase literacy, but they talk about how to research, find appropriate sources and how to cite," said Joy Wright, principal at King Philip Middle School in West Hartford. "What schools have to understand is the role libraries play and that we shouldn't cut funding."

She is a fan of the Box Tops for Education program, which can help schools earn money. The Box Tops for Education can be found on hundreds of General Mills' products and are collected by schools for cash.

In some school systems, people can designate money for new library materials, such as the Honor With Books program at Townsley Library at Simsbury High School. With a \$20

donation, the library is able to purchase a new book for its collection. Specific titles to purchase can be requested and each book has a bookplate with the donor's message and the school year when the book was purchased.

Get outdoors

Sometimes a helping hand goes beyond the classroom. Denise Smedick, office manager at Simsbury High School, said that the administration at the school is passionate about landscaping and biodiversity. This past year, students, teachers and parents gathered nearly every Wednesday to clean up the courtyard at SHS.

"Now students can cross through it when they are walking to class instead of just using the hallways. They started [the cleanup] in early October and students were able to walk through it by late May," Smedick said.

Principal Brian White of Henry James Memorial School, a middle school in Simsbury, said students participate in a service day each spring. Students work on cleaning the outside of the school or other service jobs throughout Simsbury.

"[The] service day falls under the time of Earth Day [in April]," he noted. "It's a rite of passage in spring for the eighth graders as they move on to the high school."

The concept of community support for the whole child extends to school sports.

"Education-based athletics is an extension of the education process and a valuable one at that. Students who participate in interscholastic athletics are learning life lessons and skills that will serve them well in future endeavors, not to mention the health benefits of staying active and fit. School districts across the country need and rely on the support of their community to sustain their programs," said Trish Witkin, director of athletics at Glastonbury High School. "There are many items – equipment, apparel, etc. – that coaches and programs would like to have to benefit their athletes and programs that local board of education budgets simply cannot support. We are very fortunate and appreciative of the financial support of our Board of Education. They value the connection between athletics and the academic program. Many of our expenses are covered within our school budget, but there are always items that programs could benefit from having that the budget cannot support."

"Not all districts have the support that we realize here in Glastonbury. For that reason, community support is critical," Witkin added.

With sports, support can be as simple as attending a game, whether or not one has children directly involved.

"First and foremost, attendance at games is something parents and the general community can do to

support programs," Witkin said. "The athletes work hard to prepare for their games and to play in front of a supportive crowd is gratifying. Proceeds from ticket sales, concessions, apparel, etc. often is earmarked for products or services that benefit the athletes directly. We have a 'booster membership' card families can purchase that provides their family with admission to all regular season games. Money generated through that program has been used to provide awards for athletes, as well as scholarship opportunities."

And Witkin urges community members to think beyond the well-known school sports.

"All high school sports are in need of and deserving of fan support. There do seem to be some sports that fans rally around more than others but I think they are missing out on some great competition by not getting to those other events," Witkin said. "As far as monetary support, many programs rely on concessions and other fundraisers to support their team awards or end-of-season banquets, for example. When a program receives a donation from a local business that means more money raised for their program, which is very helpful. We are very grateful for the local support our teams have received." **WHL**

Staff Writer Mara Dresner contributed to this report.

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EDUCATION

A toy story

Uhart student makes it her mission to make dolls with prostheses for children with artificial limbs

by Lynn Woike
Editor

While learning to create prostheses and orthotics at the University of Hartford, Mikaela Nelson began making dolls with prostheses, customized to look like the children who wear them.

She came up with the idea in the fall semester of her sophomore year,

explaining, "I was really drawn to kids. A lot of kids have issues working with their prosthetics and controlling them. I thought maybe a doll would be helpful."

Researching, she found nothing "modern" being made that reflected the diversity of children along with the variety of prosthetics that exist. What she did find were mothers who wanted dolls that looked like their children.

Nelson decided to try to make them, saying, "It was something I could do. I thought it would be fun for me, but it would help a lot of people."

During the summer of 2016, she bought an inexpensive doll off eBay and with some help of her father – whom she credits for her own creativity – began modifying it. It was trial and error, first trying to

melt off the limb, then cutting it and reshaping a stump with putty. Sockets were made of silicone and cornstarch.

"He helped me with molding the leg," she said. "We used a polymer clay. Now I use epoxy putty and have to wait for it to dry, but it's a lot easier to use and it's a lot more durable."

Now she also uses hot glue and felt for making the socket, calling



It's Mikaela Nelson dream to start an entire line of toys for her patients after she's graduated from the University of Hartford College of Education, Nursing and Health Professions and working as a prosthetist.

University of Hartford photo

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EDUCATION



Mikaela Nelson has made dolls with a variety of different prostheses.



it a better alternative.

Nelson made four dolls that summer. Two she sold on eBay to people she did not know, and two were made specifically for children at their parents' request.

"Parents would send me pictures," Nelson said.

She used them to customize her work.

"I made one for a boy who needed a cloth socket because that's what he had. His mom sent me a picture and it had a belt going around the waist, so I made him one of those."

He had been having difficulty putting on his prosthetic himself, but being able to practice on the doll, Nelson said, would help him control it better so eventually he could manage it on his own.

"By taking the doll's prosthesis on and off, they learn how to navigate their own."

Not only does she match skin tone and hair color, Nelson matches the rods, colors, style, position of the prosthetic and other specific details.

"I'll try to copy the design," she said. "It's not all that complicated."

Finding the right metal rods for the leg is a challenge. She made one from an extension rod for a hanging light in her kitchen and part of a wind chime for another.

"It's just stuff I find laying around," she said.

She cherishes photos and a video a mother sent her of her daughter opening the gift with the doll this past Christmas. The child named her doll Mickey after its

maker and wants to meet Nelson.

Finding time to make dolls while she's in school is another challenge.

"I'm an RA. I'm the president of the women's ultimate Frisbee team," she said.

In total, she's now made seven dolls. Her academic advisor, Mike Wining, purchased one.

"I wanted the doll for my kids as soon as I heard about the story because my kids are familiar with 'Andrew Can Ski,' from their day care. Andrew is a story character, based on Andrew Haraghey, a junior downhill ski racer seeking a bid to the Paralympics in 2018. My kids love 'Andrew Can Ski,' so this was a great way to provide them with an opportunity to have a special person at home. My kids loved

the doll, and it is now a welcome member of our household collection. It's really meaningful that we can play together while also incorporating the concept that there are kids with all different body types out there," he said.

So far, all the dolls she's made have had prosthetics on their legs, but she's ready to make a doll with a prosthetic arm.

In the short term, Nelson is hoping to get a variety of dolls donated so she can customize them and donate them to local hospitals to give to their patients. In the long run, she'd like to start a company that customizes dolls to the children who will own them.

"I don't really have connections to do that yet," she said, but added, "I think it would be really cool ... to

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have each doll super unique to each person. There are so many combinations.”

Each doll takes a couple of days to make, with a lot of that time needed for drying. Fashioning ankle braces, knee pads and other details also increases the amount of time and the cost.

To date, dolls have sold for \$160-\$170, but a new American Girl doll would push the price to more than \$200.

“I want to work with all sorts of dolls, for different people’s budgets,” Nelson said.

It’s more about making children happy than making money, she said.



When she was growing up, she said, “[Dolls] were a huge part of my life. I had one that I took with me everywhere.”

That is part of the reason she is willing to customize a doll the child currently owns and loves.

Growing up, Nelson said, her uncle had friends with amputations and as he talked about them. “I thought that was really interesting. I knew I wanted to do something with science and math, but I wanted something with an artistic side, too, so I thought prosthetics would be really good because it has a lot of science and sculpting and hands-on



University of Hartford photos

activities involved with it.”

She said she chose the University of Hartford because she’d heard prosthetics and orthotics “was a really good program” and because it was the university closest to her home in Buffalo, New York.

She’s in the third year of the five-year program. When she graduates in 2019, she’ll have a bachelor’s degree in health science and a master’s degree in prosthetic and orthotics. [WHL](#)

Find Mikaela Nelson on Etsy at MickeysMission.



University of Hartford photo

Mikaela Nelson customized the doll she made for this girl so that it looked like her and her own prostheses.



Courtesy photo



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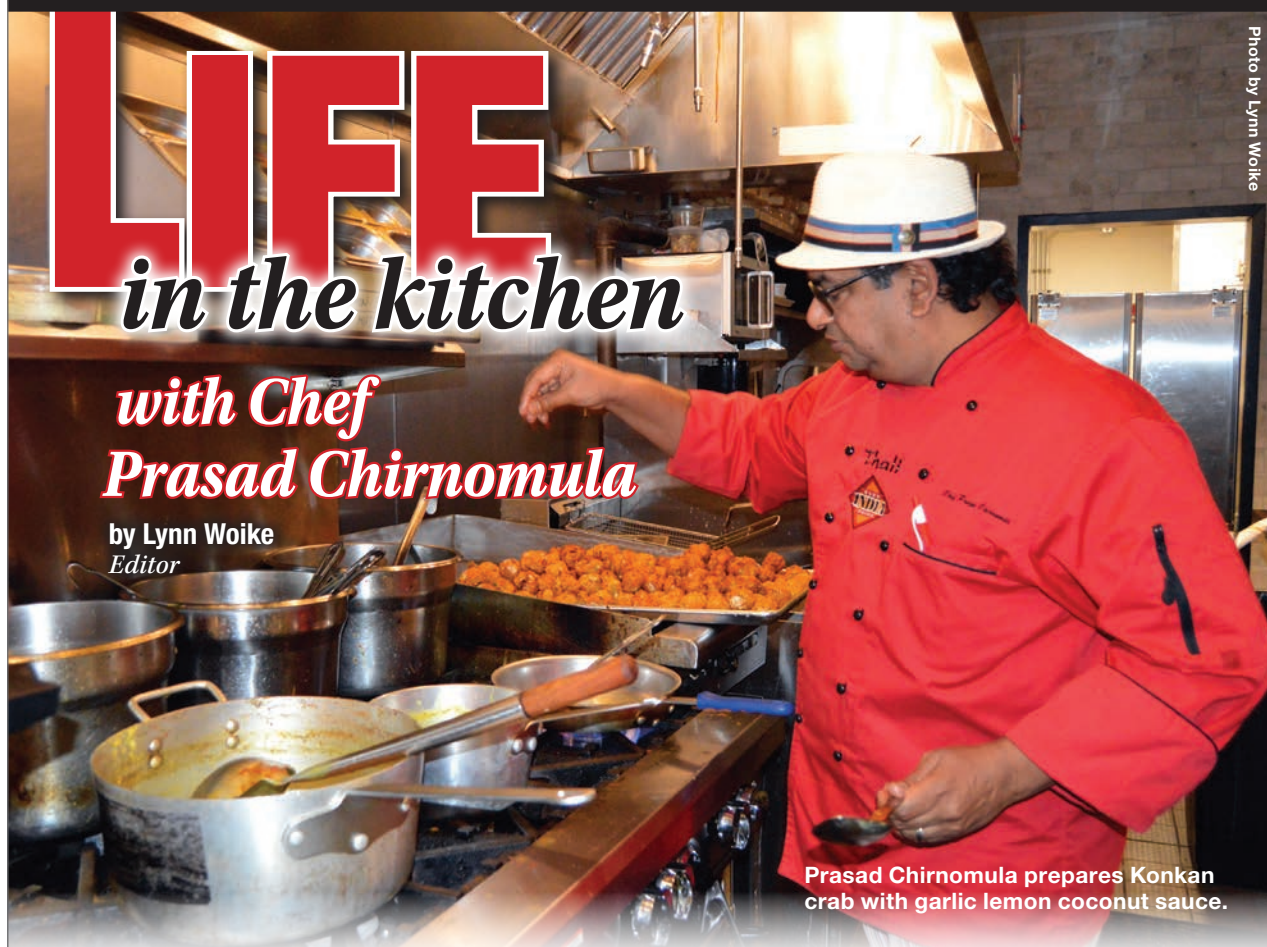
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LIFE

in the kitchen

with Chef Prasad Chirnomula

by Lynn Woike
Editor



Prasad Chirnomula prepares Konkani crab with garlic lemon coconut sauce.

In 2006, chef Prasad Chirnomula knew he had made it when the New York Times gave his third restaurant, Thali, a three-star review.

"It was an instant success and my dream came true," he said.

That's when he got the first request to move to Blue Back Square. Back then, he was thinking of expanding to Boston or New York City. It turned out he expanded in New Haven and Fairfield counties, first with two restaurants on the Yale University campus – Thali Too, a vegetarian restaurant, and Oaxaca Kitchen, serving Mexican fare – then his largest restaurant, India, in New Canaan.

Ten years passed and another inquiry came. This time he toured the area and signed a lease for 54 Memorial Road, the space formerly occupied by Moe's, opening India Restaurant and Bar.

He gave up part of the space to Tyler Anderson of Millwright's and Jamie McDonald of Bear's Smokehouse, who will be opening their collaboration restaurant, The Cook and the Bear, next door to India, in

what had been The Counter and then Pearl's Grill.

"I can't have better neighbors than Tyler and Jamie," Chirnomula said, adding he was happy there would be two good restaurants next door to one another.

"I looked at the corner location. I wasn't sure I wanted a big space," he said. But, less than a month after opening, he noted many large groups come in and he could use some extra square footage.

From the time he opened his first restaurant – Bombay Bar and Grill in Westport – in 1993 at the age of 33, Chirnomula said his goal has been to put Indian food "on the map in Connecticut," explaining, "I want to change what people think about this food. It's not hot. It's not curry."

The menu offers a casual approach to fine food that incorporates his love of the street foods and his mother's cooking back home, along with an appreciation for small plates originally equated with Spanish food – all served in a black-white-and-red French-inspired setting with an open kitchen and a tiny bar area.

His love of cooking began sitting on a stool in the kitchen,

watching his mother prepare food in his native India.

"I thought cooking was cool," he said. His parents, however, wanted him to attend a medical college. "Growing up in a medical family, my father was a doctor and every cousin I have is a doctor; their wives are doctors. The only thing I saw was they were studying so much and I thought I could not do that. ... Food was my passion, but food was only one part of my passion. In general, hospitality meant a lot. I wanted to be in a five-star hotel group with wonderful restaurants."

His parents did come to support his choice. After graduating in 1985, Chirnomula rapidly rose to director of food and beverage at a large hotel. At 22, he was overseeing a staff of 200 people and multiple kitchens, while wearing "a suit and fake glasses because I wanted to look older" and more capable, he said.

Encouraged to move to "the land of opportunity," he came to the United States in 1986 and began with the only job he could get despite his college degree and experience in India – bussing tables on Long Island. Having given up his

Photo by Lynn Woike

hotel suite, room service and a chaffier to share an overcrowded apartment, cold weather and walking to work was not the better life he had in mind.

Spending his break time helping in the kitchen got him a job as a sous chef, and soon he began opening a series of Indian restaurants for others. In 1993, he joined with a group of 10 investors and opened his first restaurant, followed by six more. In 2000 he went solo, opening Thali in New Canaan in 2001, then expanding to Ridgefield in 2004 before coming to New Haven in 2006.

All his previous restaurants have been celebrated, and this one is, too.

"I've opened several restaurants in my life but what I see in West Hartford, I've not seen. People come to me and say, 'Thank you for opening,' which is very unusual. I mean, I stand at the door and say, 'Thank you for coming. Thank you for dining with us,' but this is one town I'm finding is ... crazy. ... I go to Crate & Barrel, I go to Staples [and people come up to me and say], 'Chef, thank you.' This is an honor being here."

India's menu includes recognizable dishes such as tandoori chicken and biryani, along with signature dishes including Chicken Tikka Masala and Andhra chicken stew. There's also a selection of vegetarian items.

Ingredients are fresh, and locally sourced when possible.

"I don't follow recipes. Cooking is a feel. You've got to get the ingredients right. You have to mix and match," he said, explaining patrons will not find salt and pepper on the table because everything is perfectly seasoned.

Reservations for weekends are full and the take out orders are increasing.

To get the feel of the town, Chirnomula moved here temporarily.

While he will soon end his temporary residency, he will be returning often "to be part of the community, participate in charity events and partner with fellow chefs to give back to the community."

He won the Elm City Iron Chef competition in 2011 and 2013, and appeared in "Chopped" on Food Network in 2012.

"It's not just about winning; it's about being there with other chefs, the pressure, and all that. 'Chopped' was a fun experience. It was a lot of preparation. But I think you're also nervous because there's cameras in your face, on your hands. It's pressure and it's real time. So, what I tried to do was too much."

He is looking forward to again leading a gourmet food tour of India, hosting private tasting dinners and teaching cooking classes.

"I love it," he said of his latest restaurant. "People have a lot of expectations and I want to live up to them. My only regret is I should have taken a bigger space. I'll wait a couple of months before deciding what to do," said Chirnomula, who admitted to getting bored easily.

"If I'm not busy, I start thinking what I'm going to do next," he said. **WHL**

The restaurant is open daily at 11:30 a.m. with various closing times. Call 860-726-4103 or visit www.INDIAwestHartford.com.



Red, black and white add a classic look to the small space.

We asked chef Chirnomula questions for more insight on his personality:

Q: What's your "secret weapon" ingredient?

A: I use star anise in some dishes, which combines with other spices to create a truly unique flavor; and I dry roast and grind most of my spices to squeeze the maximum amount of flavor from them, especially fenugreek.

Q: What's your least favorite food?

A: I am not a big fan of intestines. I have tried it a few times and just can't seem to get into it.

Q: What is the one cooking technique that everyone should know how to do?

A: When cooking meat and fish, not to play with it too much. It's best to turn it in the pan or oven only once.

Q: If you could take any celebrity chef out to dinner, who would it be and where would you take them?

A: I'd take myself out to dinner for a home-cooked meal. In lieu of that, I can't really admire the foul-mouthed British chef [Gordon Ramsay] but I would take him to my new West Hartford location. Of course Tyler Anderson would be the other choice.

Q: What is your favorite cookbook?

A: Nothing really, but Google helps

Q: What herb or spice best describes your personality?

A: The ghost pepper – hot and spicy and a lot of attitude in a sweet way.

Q: If you weren't a chef, what profession would you be?

A: A doctor – that's what my parents originally wanted me to be.

Q: What's your "go to" staple dish?

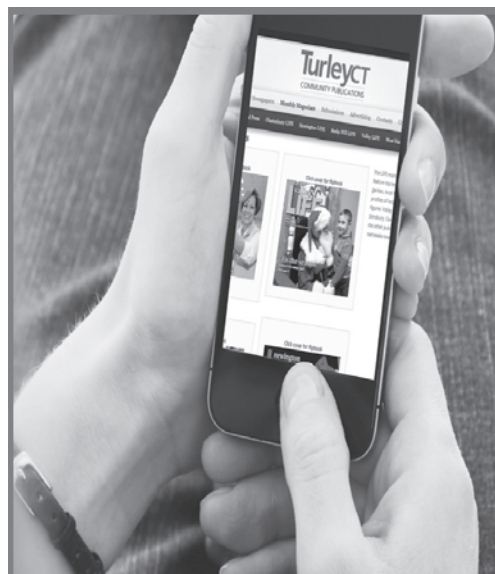
A: Konkan crab because it's made quickly and is bursting with subtle flavors and it's already a big favorite with every restaurant crew.

Q: What do you like to cook when having guests to your home?

A: Vegetarian Indian street food, preferably biryani with young local goat, chicken livers and goat kidneys.

Q: It's your last meal on earth. What's on your plate?

A: Beer, biryani and my mother's Andhra chicken, which I currently serve in the restaurant in West Hartford.



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Healthy Living

Medical myths

Health professionals set the record straight

by Lynn Woike
LIFE Staff

Health myths, misinformation, half-truths and old wives' tales continue to dictate our choices and behaviors. Casual research around the Internet can leave you confused, so we turned to local experts to set the record straight.

Static stretching has little benefit before a workout and may even reduce performance.

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Healthy Living

MYTH: Stretching before exercise reduces the risk of injury.

TRUTH: Boguslaw Badon, licensed physical therapist and owner of Farmington Valley Physical Therapy, said many of her clients feel that pre-exercise stretching will reduce the risk of injury through improvements in range of motion, decreased muscle stiffness and increased blood flow. However, none of that is true.

"Traditional stretching, where you hold a pose with your body in such a way so that you feel a pull on your connective tissue or muscles, is called static stretching. Many people will stretch their hamstrings and quads before a run, or arms and shoulders before swimming or tennis. The truth is, you're probably not doing much for your workout and might even be reducing your strength, power and performance," she said.

Studies have concluded that stretching does not affect the incidence of overuse injuries, nor does it reduce the muscle soreness that can come a day or two after having done

too much. In addition, Badon said, static stretching could actually reduce strength and power between 5 percent and 30 percent.

To prepare for exercise, she recommends a gradual aerobic warmup that includes dynamic stretching for sports that require more range of motion.

"Static stretching is better as part of cool down and recovery when reducing muscle tension and elasticity makes more sense and you won't be immediately relying on your muscles to generate power," she said.

Static stretching as well as exercise systems that emphasize eccentric muscle strengthening like Pilates, Somatic Movement, Gyrotonic or Yoga, all are beneficial as part of a well-rounded fitness regimen to help maintain a strong, flexible, coordinated body.

MYTH: Weight loss is just calories in vs. calories out.

TRUTH: While weight loss advice is often pared down to sayings such as "You have to burn more calories than you eat to lose weight," Renee Bordeaux,

owner of Bordeaux Nutrition in Newington, said, "Most people who are overweight actually don't consume enough calories."

Most people, she explained, will lose some weight by cutting back moderately on calories, but that's not the whole story.

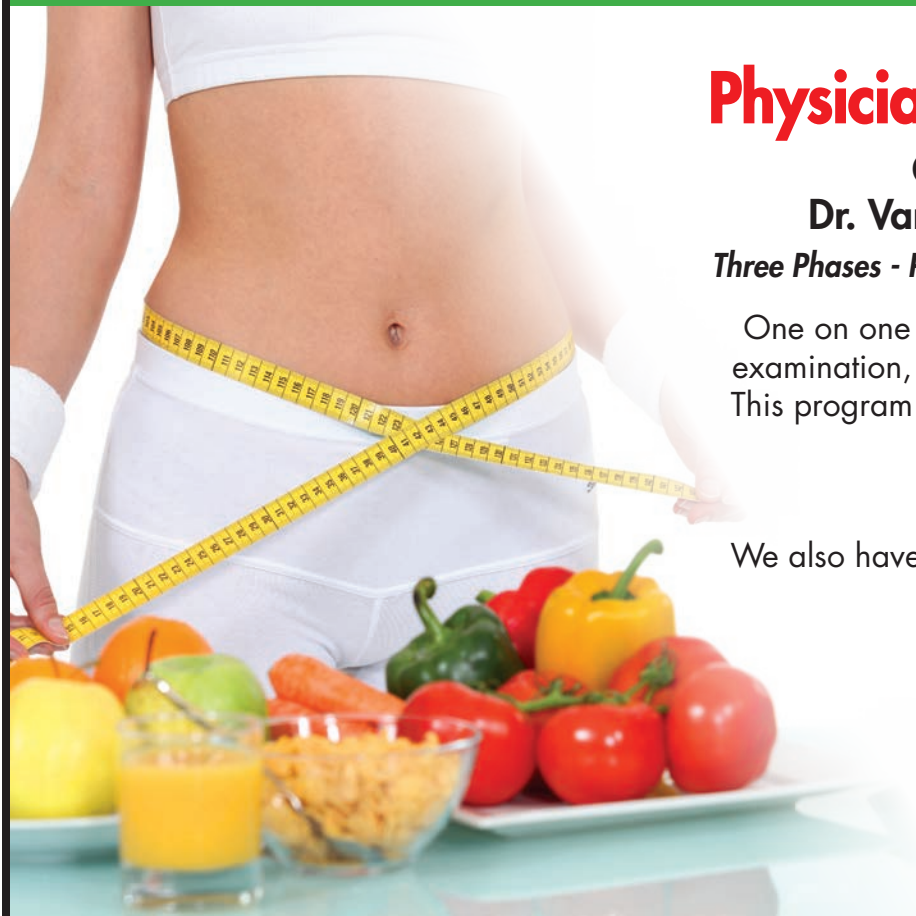
"If you cut back too much, your body thinks you are starving, causing it to burn even less calories, making weight loss more difficult."

She recommends eating high-quality foods including lean meats, fresh fruits and vegetables to fuel your metabolism throughout the day.

"That way, the body will feel it is receiving enough calories and will shed excess fat."



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MYTH: You can spot reduce fatty areas.

TRUTH: "Selective fat reduction is not something that can be done with exercise," said Mary Badon, a physician and the director of SOMA Movement Studio in Unionville.

"The fat-storing cells in your body, called adipocytes, are like balloons. When you are skinny, you have empty balloons all over your body. As you gain weight, these balloons fill with fat. The number of adipocytes stays the same regardless of your weight; the amount of fat they are storing simply changes. The myth of spot training is that if you do a lot of a certain exercise, you can selectively lose weight in your legs, core, arms, etc. Unfortunately, while you can selectively build muscle mass in certain parts of your body, barring hormonal issues, fat loss happens all over your body. If you want to lose fat from a specific spot of your body, like your abs, you have to lose overall body fat," she said.

On a related note, she said it is true that permanent fat reduction procedures such as liposuction and non-surgical liposuction can create uneven fat distribution upon regaining weight.

"Since some of the adipocytes are gone, there is no longer a place to store fat in that part of the body. Should you gain weight in the future, the fat will be stored in whatever adipocytes remain in your body, so you may see more weight gain in the untreated parts of your body like your arms, back, or chin than you normally would if your normal weight gain pattern would get a muffin top."



Moderate intake of good fats creates a full feeling and helps with the absorption of fat-soluble vitamins.

MYTH: Fat makes you fat.

TRUTH: For the past several decades, faulty studies have put forth the notion that following a low-fat and, consequently, higher carbohydrate diet, would help lower weight and lead to better overall health.

"After years of following these guidelines, the reality is that two-thirds of Americans are overweight, with one-third categorized as obese," said Denis Horen, a nutrition coach at Ideal Weight Loss in Simsbury. "More recent research on fat has proven the exact opposite to be true and has led to a paradigm shift from lower fat to lower carb diets."

A moderate intake of good fats – such as nuts, olive oil and avocado – creates a feeling of fullness, makes food taste better and helps with the absorption of fat-soluble vitamins, he said.

"Excessive carbohydrates, which break down into blood sugar, are the real culprit. Processed foods, which are high in carbs, can lead to insulin spikes and, consequently, decreased blood sugar. This in turn causes us to be hungrier and crave more sugar.

Beyond obesity, higher carb intake can lead to metabolic syndrome and Type 2 diabetes.

"Moderate fat consumption doesn't make you fat. Empty carbohydrate calories found in processed foods make you fat," Horen said.

MYTH: Once you start chiropractic treatment you have to continue for the rest of your life.

TRUTH: Dr. Alexa Veeder of Back to Motion Sports Rehab and Fitness in Newington explains that chiropractic is a mechanical – rather than chemical – treatment, aimed at addressing structural problems. When injuries occur, muscles become hypertonic in an effort to splint, immobilize and protect the injured area. "Chiropractic treatment is designed to gently reduce fixation and restore mobility and function to affected joints. Treatment can be relatively short term – several visits – with minor problems, or somewhat longer when there is radiating pain or soft tissue involvement," Veeder said.

"Since we have become more sedentary, often spending hours sitting at our desks and computers, it is more common to see injuries related to ongoing repetitive activities. As a result, many patients opt for maintenance care, to offset this constant repetition. Many athletes also choose regular visits to gain a competitive edge and to maintain structural balance and mobility."

MYTH: Gluten-free foods are healthier.

TRUTH: "Gluten is a protein

found primarily in wheat, barley, rye and many processed foods," explained Jennifer Thomas, a food-loving POP Weight Loss nutritionist out of Glastonbury who holds two degrees in nutrition.

"Individuals with celiac disease or a sensitivity to gluten should avoid these foods. However, gluten-free alternatives like breads and baked goods are often unhealthy choices. This is because gluten-free flours tend to be lower in fiber and protein, and higher on the glycemic index. This means they raise your blood sugar too quickly.

"Extra fats and sugars are also likely to be added to improve taste and texture. A healthier solution is to focus on naturally gluten-free foods like brown rice, quinoa, sweet potatoes, beans and lentils. A gluten-free sandwich can be made healthier by adding hummus and veggies for fiber and a good protein source like turkey. Also, keep in mind that most baked goods are not healthy, period," she said.

MYTH: Cracking your knuckles will lead to arthritis.

TRUTH: "According to Western Journal of Medicine, a study was conducted on 28 patients of a senior citizen home who were able to recall knuckle cracking as a child or even now, and those who did not. Each patient was asked to demonstrate how they cracked their knuckle, and their hands were examined clinically with X-rays. Out of the 14 patients who cracked their knuckles, only one had a clinically diagnosed case of osteoarthritis and out of the 14 who were not knuckle crackers, eight patients had diagnosed cases of

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osteoarthritis," said Dr. Bradley Visconti of Back to Motion Rehab and Fitness in Newington.

There were no major differences between those who did and didn't crack their knuckles, disproving the theory, he said.

As for the sound made when knuckles are "cracked," Visconti said it is the release of synovial gases and fluid between the joints being manipulated.

MYTH: Feed a cold, starve a fever.

TRUTH: Dr. Lakshmi Babu, a family medicine physician with a practice at ProHealth of Unionville, said this old adage is wrong.

The thought process had been that eating would warm the body when it had a cold

and that avoiding food would keep it from getting more heated while experiencing a fever.

"Recent medical science has said that we really should feed a cold and feed a fever, because food is fuel and when we're fighting an illness, we need healthy food," she said, adding that while it's important to eat without overeating, it's even more critical to stay hydrated.

The best thing to drink is water or herbal tea. Hot tea has the added benefit of a vapor that can help combat dry nasal passages when you have a cold. Fluids such as Gatorade or Pedialyte that

replace electrolytes are also fine. Alcohol or caffeinated beverages are not good because they contribute to dehydration, "so avoiding those would be a good thing," Babu said.

MYTH: Protein shakes will add muscle and make you bulky

TRUTH: Protein is necessary for a healthy, strong physique, said Corey Vincent of American Nutrition Center in Avon.

"While protein is the building block for muscle tissue, eating protein and drinking shakes will not make you bulky. Protein will help maintain lean muscle tissue, keep you strong for daily activities and help keep you satisfied throughout the day," he said.

Active individuals should have protein from healthy sources at all meals.

"Protein shakes are an alter-



Protein helps maintain lean muscle tissue and helps keep hunger satiated throughout the day.

native when not enough protein is taken in through food," Vincent said, adding, "Many people associate protein shakes with only muscle building, when in reality it should be thought of as general nutrition for health. When your daily protein goal is not met through food, life is busy, or appetite is low, a high-quality protein shake can help you maintain good protein levels. This will aid in keeping you feeling full and can actually help increase weight loss." **WHL**

Food is important fuel when fighting any illness, cold or fever, and must be combined with proper hydration.

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Feeling better, *naturally*

**Treating winter
woes with
supplements,
lifestyle choices**

by Mara Dresner
Staff Writer

Winter is in full swing and that means that we're knee-deep in seasonal woes.

Even those of us who stay healthy the rest of the year often find ourselves down and out by the time February rolls around. And

just because an ailment is common doesn't mean it can't make you miserable.

While there are times when reaching for a traditional cure is appropriate and necessary, some folks like to give more natural remedies a try. We spoke to some health-care experts to see what they recommend to prevent and treat some common maladies. Please remember that everyone is different and that no advice is one size fits all. Check with your own health care provider to make sure a supplement is safe for you, especially if you have existing medical conditions or are taking other supplements or medications.

Cough and cold

"Cold viruses run rampant this time

of year. To avoid getting one, boost your immune system now with a healthy diet.

High sugar and processed foods tend to weaken the immune system.

Gear your diet toward lean proteins, fruits and vegetables to reduce processed foods and boost antioxidants in the body," Renée J. Bordeaux, a registered dietitian, Certified dietitian-nutritionist and certified personal trainer, owner and president of Bordeaux Nutrition in Newington, recommended.

If you do feel a cold coming on, Bordeaux suggests adding a few supplements.

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Healthy Living

citrus fruits and bell peppers. It takes a lot of oranges to boost your C levels. Try supplementing with up to 2,000 mg daily," she said. "Also try Quercetin, which helps decrease the histamine reaction that is responsible for symptoms like a stuffy and runny nose. It is naturally found in foods like apples and cruciferous veggies, but can also be supplemented with up to 750 mg daily."

Sometimes, it's just a cough that's giving you trouble.

"I find anything [like] citrus fruits really helps break up a cough. So I eat lots of oranges and grapefruits or add lemon juice to some hot water or herbal tea first thing in the morning to soothe a cough," Christina Baribault-Ortiz, a healthy lifestyle coach from Glastonbury, said.

She also recommends generally supporting your immune system.

"Organic raw chlorella powder derived from green plants have enough nutrients to kick any cough when consumed regularly," she

noted. "It's very strong, so I recommend adding a small amount – 1 teaspoon – to a smoothie or stir into some orange juice to start. Work this into your regimen regularly and when you do get that inevitable cough/cold, it won't last as long."

Tummy troubles

It may not be glamorous to discuss, but sooner or later, everyone is struck by a bout of diarrhea. Sharon Hunter, ND, of The Connecticut Center for Health in West Hartford, said causes include viral, bacterial (usually food-borne) and antibiotic-induced.

"It's always wise to call one's health care provider. They will know what is going around, how long it generally lasts and common things to watch out for," she said. "Patients should see the doctor if they experience diarrhea that lasts longer than three days, fever of 102 or higher, signs of dehydration/severe loss of fluids [from] vomiting and/or diarrhea, severe abdominal pain, [or] any

of these symptoms: blood in the stool, black tarry looking stools."

She recommends trying what she said is a "wonderful home treatment for diarrhea":

Applesauce

Add 1/8 tsp cinnamon (650 mg)

Add 1/2 tsp slippery elm powder (1.25 g/1250 mg)

Optional: add carob powder 1/4-1/2 tsp

The addition of a probiotic may be beneficial.

Repeat four to six times daily.

"The slippery elm and probiotic will be beneficial to continue after resolution of the diarrhea in order to continue to soothe the intestines," she noted. "All three ingredients help to stop diarrhea. The cinnamon also helps tone and soothes the intestines. You can repeat the carob and slippery elm multiple times per day."

Hunter said that cinnamon should be limited to 3/4 teaspoon per day for 150-pound adult. Children should limit it to much less, based on weight.

For example, a 50-pound child should not exceed 1/8 teaspoon per day in divided doses, split over four servings.

A smaller child should omit the cinnamon entirely and use only the carob and slippery elm.

"For slippery elm, the powder is best, especially for a child who can't swallow capsules. However, one can purchase caps and open them into the apple sauce," she said. "This treatment works time after time, tastes good and is usually easy to get into kids who are not vomiting. Avoid any foods that aggravate diarrhea and stick to a bland diet."

BRAT is the classic diet for diarrhea, which stands for bananas, rice, applesauce and toast (omitting the toast if gluten free).

Winter blues

Shorter days can often bring on an attack of the winter blues.

Christine Loudon, ND, of The Connecticut Center for Health in West Hartford, noted that her



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practice integrates supplements, herbal medicine and lifestyle approaches.

"Fatigue can be a symptom of illness, and individuals should consult their physician to rule out any underlying medical condition. Seasonal affective disorder can be mild or severe, and if symptoms of depression are severe or interfere with daily life the individual should consult a physician," she noted.

She makes these recommendations for healthy adults on no medications.

"Many people who feel low energy in the winter are responding to the reduced exposure to light. My patients find significant benefit using a 'happy light.' Light therapy can lift mood and energy. In addition, it is one of the best methods for restoring normal sleep patterns. Special lights providing white light – not blue light, which can cause macular degeneration – can be purchased and should provide 10,000 lux at 12 inches or more," she explained.

The dose is 30 minutes of light in the morning.

"Good quality and quantity of sleep is crucial for good energy and mood. We cannot expect to feel energized and happy if we skimp on sleep. I tell my patients to aim for eight hours a night. If a patient is having trouble falling asleep, the light therapy can restore normal patterns. The second option is melatonin. People with SAD have an abnormal melatonin pattern. I often use 1 to 3 mg given at bedtime to restore the sleep pattern," she said.

Melatonin can cause excessive dreaming or nightmares in some individuals.

Magnesium can also help patients with insomnia and fatigue.

"In my patient population, magnesium deficiency is common. The best food sources are leafy greens such as spinach and kale. Almonds are a good source as well. To supplement with magnesium I recommend 200 to 400 mg of magnesium, glycinate if the patient is prone to

anxiety, or citrate if the patient tends toward constipation.

"The most common side effect of magnesium is loose stool and this is more likely with the citrate form. Individuals should not supplement with more than 400 mg without consulting a physician. People with kidney problems must be cautious with magnesium supplements as they may experience toxicity," she explained.

Louden said that even something as basic as breathing can make a difference in how a patient feels.

"Pranayama or breath exercise is a simple, effective way to increase energy and alertness and lift mood. It can be done throughout the day. I encourage my patients to use this at work if they suffer an afternoon slump. Many of my patients sneak away to a bathroom stall and practice this. Alternate nostril breathing is one of my favorites. To increase energy, start with the inhale on the right; to calm down at bedtime, start with the inhale on the left," she

noted. "Hold your right thumb over your right nostril and inhale deeply through your left nostril. At the peak of your inhalation, close off your left nostril with your fourth finger, then exhale smoothly through your right nostril. After a full exhalation, inhale through the right nostril, closing it off with your right thumb at the peak of your inhalation. Continue performing alternate nostril breathing for one to five minutes, following the same pattern."

She also recommends aromatherapy to help with mood.

"Studies show aromatherapy can have a profound influence on mood, and I recommend aromatherapy for anxiety and depression. For increasing energy, mental alertness and improving mood, lemon or lemongrass are effective," Loudon said.

"A diffuser is the best way to use essential oils, but for energy on the go, my patients will place two to three drops on a cotton handkerchief and inhale the scent as they drive to work." **WHL**



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Did you know?

Running on a variety of surfaces instead of sticking to just one surface may help runners reduce their risk of injury. Officials with the USA Track and Field's Sports Medicine and Science Committee recommend that runners vary their runs so they run on pavement, trails and tracks.






While it helps to run on various surfaces, researchers do not believe one particular surface is better than another. In fact, while running on asphalt has long been assumed to increase injury risk because of the presumption that harder surfaces produce greater impact forces on the body, a 2008 study from researchers at the Hannover Medical School Department of Plastic, Hand and Reconstructive Surgery in Germany found that running on asphalt surfaces decreased mid-portion tendinopathy risk while running on sand surfaces increased that risk tenfold. **WHL**



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As part of the Hartford Orthopedic Surgeons team, Dr. Yannopoulos will specialize in Spine Surgery – specifically, Lumbar Micro-Discectomy, Laminectomy, and Lumbar and Cervical Fusions – along with Arthroscopic Surgery, Sports Medicine and General Orthopedics.

Dr. Yannopoulos joins John Mara, MD, Robert McAllister, MD and Randall Risinger, MD of Hartford Orthopedic Surgeons and is welcoming new patients at this time. To arrange a consultation, please call us at 860-525-4469.



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Healthy Living

When the pain won't quit

Headache center receives major grant

by Mara Dresner
Staff Writer

Dr. Brian Grosberg, director of the Hartford HealthCare Headache Program, was awarded the first-ever Migraine Research Foundation "Impact" Award, which he shares with Harvard Medical School's Dr. Rami Burstein.

This \$250,000 grant, announced

in the fall, will fund research on status migrainosus, a severe form of migraine that lasts longer than three days.

Grosberg spoke to the LIFE papers about migraines and his hopes for the headache center, which has multiple locations, including West Hartford and Wethersfield.

Q. What's a migraine?

A. A migraine is a neurologic condition; it's not just a headache. Nearly 36 million people suffer from migraine, more women than men. It's characterized by a moderate to severe headache, which can often be associated with hypersensitivity to light or sound, and can sometimes be accompanied by



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Healthy Living

nausea and/or vomiting. A migraine typically lasts four hours, up to three days if it's untreated or unsuccessfully treated. And for 20- to 25-percent of people with migraine there is an aura present.

Q. How did your interest in migraine develop?

A. Serendipity. In the first year of my neurology residency, I took care of a woman who is a litigator. She was out of work for almost a month for debilitating migraines. She was hospitalized and, after several days, she was completely pain free [when she was discharged]. I said to myself, "This is amazing." It turns out the person who admitted her to the hospital was the director of the Montefiore Headache Center. We got to talking and he took me under his wing. The rest is history. I'm a migraine sufferer, but that's not the main the reason I went into it. It really was serendipity.

Q. Tell me about the Hartford HealthCare Headache Center.

A. Our goal is to build something that's not being done across the country, a headache program across the entire health care system from scratch. In another 3 and 1/2 to four years, it will be the largest, most comprehensive headache program in the country.

Our vision is to build a nationally renowned program. To do that, we're an academic headache program. We're not only providing the highest quality of care, we're training future leaders in headache medicine and advancing clinical care in headache medicine.

There are three arms to building a nationally renowned program. First is delivering personalized, high-quality headache care. If you look at the stats of the program, nearly 15 percent of patients are traveling from out of the State of Connecticut already. We're seeing patients from 150 towns

across Connecticut.

That's really a testament of the people I work with. One patient likened it to the TV show "Cheers," where everybody knows your name. It's how patient-centered, how friendly the office staff is. That's the team of people I'm fortunate to have work with me.

The next arm is to train the future leaders in headache medicine, ... and the third arm of the program is advanced clinical research: What are the cutting-edge techniques, the devices, the treatment, the research that can help make an impact in the real world?

Q. What is status migrainosus and why is the grant important?

A. [People] can have a migraine for a week; they can have a migraine for a month; they can have a migraine for three months. It's a more severe migraine. For this subset of patients, and there are probably millions of sufferers worldwide, it's debilitating. Sometimes they don't break on their own, and what do they do then?

When we think of research, we think of "evidence-based research," randomized, double-blind controlled trials, without the physician knowing, without the patient knowing. The challenge becomes how well does the evidence from a trial apply to the care of an individual patient? For the results to be statistically valid, we have to get hundreds of thousands [of patients].

The challenge becomes because there are extensive inclusion/exclusion [criteria] – patients who are too old, too young, people whose histories are too complex – these are the patients typically visiting the headache center. This is to whom individualized medicine can provide the most appropriate answers. How do we tailor treatments to individual patients?

What we're doing is to de-



Grosberg, director of the Hartford HealthCare Headache Program, has been awarded the first-ever Migraine Research Foundation "Impact" Award. This \$250,000 grant will fund research on status migrainosus, a severe form of migraine.

termine whether it's possible to identify individual patients who are clear responders to certain treatments and then find common denominators that are absent to individual patients who don't respond to the same treatments and vice versa. We're going to profile people who clearly respond to treatments and people who clearly don't respond and determine the attributes that show why and how somebody responds to treatment.

Let's say someone comes to my office and has had status migrainosus for a week. I can use one of four or five treatments. If I'm able to get the right treatment for that individual right away, it saves them. I've nailed it the first thing and I take that information and publish it. Now you disseminate this information to hundreds of thousands of providers worldwide and you've impacted millions of sufferers. It's not been done anywhere in the world. The grant from the Migraine Research Foundation is the first of its kind ever. It's probably one of the most exciting things happening in migraine in the country, if not the world. **WHL**

Learn more at hartford-healthcare.org/services/headache-center.

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Healthy Living

Pros and cons of a detox diet cleanse



Detox diet adherents tout the benefits of cleansing their bodies. The detox craze can be confusing, and misinformation regarding the best way to proceed with a cleanse only illustrates the emphasis men and women considering detox diets must place

on learning as much about them as possible.

Detoxing involves changing one's diet for a predetermined period of time for the purpose of ridding the body of unhealthy, potentially toxic substances. While there may be some immediate weight loss associated with detoxing, losing weight is

not the main purpose of detoxing.

Men and women have various detox options to choose from, including some that target specific areas of the body or others that aim to improve overall health.

Detox diets tend to be restrictive diets, which may not make them practical for everyone – particularly

those who may have health ailments or specific dietary needs. Consult with a physician prior to beginning a detox diet to ensure it will not interfere with any treatments. In addition, it can help to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of detox diets to determine if doing a cleanse is the right choice for you.

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This can translate into more motivation to exercise or be active.

- **New foods:** A detox may require you to increase consumption of whole foods and participate in “clean eating.” Eating cleanly is about selecting the healthiest options in each of the food groups. You may be exposed to new ingredients and discover healthy options you love.

- **Benefit the immune system:** You may find that healthy eating has positive effects on your immune system. This may make it easier to fend off illnesses or improve recovery time on those occasions when you get sick.

Cons

- **Potential for nutrient deficiency:** Restrictive eating may deprive the body of certain nutrients it needs to remain in optimal shape. Nutrient deficiency can be dangerous, so it’s important to proceed with caution.

- **Weight loss concerns:** If your goal is to lose weight, do not expect

detox diets alone to produce permanent weight loss. Many people experience weight gain after they stop a detox, says the health resource Everyday Home Remedy. Weight loss is better achieved gradually and through consistent healthy eating and exercise rather than through a cleanse.

- **Potential to overextend**

detox diets: Some people extend a detox for longer than is recommended in an effort to experience greater gains. They may feel that two or three weeks of a cleanse may be doing more good than simply one week. This is not a

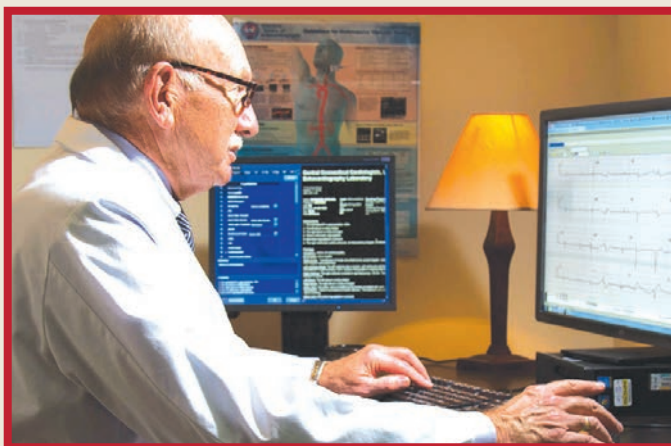
good idea because you can deprive your body of the balance of foods it needs to thrive.

Detox diets can be short-term dietary options that bring about renewed vigor and health. Speak with a doctor and nutritionist to determine if a cleanse is best for you. **WHL**

Pros

- **Eliminate poor eating habits:** Cleanses may help you to take better inventory of your eating habits and encourage you to make healthy choices in the process. Detox diets require that their adherents eliminate particular foods for a period of time and, in many instances, these off-limits foods are overly processed items that may not be the best food choices in the first place.

- **Increase vitality and energy levels:** Detox diets can sometimes increase one’s energy and stamina.



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Courtesy photo



Expanding vocabulary

French and Spanish foreign film program at library is a hit

by Alicia B. Smith
Associate Editor

Parlez vous Français? Even if you don't, or haven't in some time, the Noah Webster Public Library's French and Spanish film series are one way to keep in touch with the languages and enjoy some good conversation. En Français or Espanol.

In 2016, the Noah Webster Public Library celebrated the 10th anniversary of Les Franco à la Biblio, its French film series. The films are shown on Tuesdays in September, October, November, March, April and May.

Four years ago the library began Hablemos de Cine for those interested in a Spanish series. This program runs Wednesday evenings in March, April and May.

The French program began through the suggestion of the previ-

ous library director who knew of patrons and a staff member who spoke the language and asked if they would be interested in developing a program for those who would like to brush up on their speaking skills.

What developed was a series of six to eight meetings in which a French film would be shown, with English subtitles, followed by a discussion of the film in French. The movies help to share French culture and the optional discussion enabled Francophones to use and improve their language skills.

"Spanish came along because, why not," said current Library Director Martha Church.

Amy McCue, head of public services, said a fluent Spanish-speaking staff member was approached to begin a Spanish program.

"We are able to get so many

films in Spanish, it seems like a natural program," McCue said.

Both programs found some appeal to those in the library's Speak It Up programs, geared toward non-native English speakers looking to improve their English. Many found the programs were an opportunity to speak their native language.

"The idea of being able to share their culture and language has been really positive," Church said.

For many participants, the post-film discussion is what they most enjoy about the evening. Many of the films can be found on DVD or through Netflix, so the speaking portion brings a lively dialogue.

Organizers said that while the discussions are held in French or Spanish, no one should feel intimidated, regardless of how well they



Photo by Alicia B. Smith

Pat Clark coordinates the French film series.

speak the language. The subtitles enable everyone to follow the story and the discussion is for all levels of speakers, not just those who are fluent or native.

The French program usually draws close to 20 people.

In addition to the film and conversation, McCue said the French program has incorporated reading a short story in that language as well and then watching the movie based on the book.

"Both of these programs thrive on the energy of the attendees," said Pat Clark, who coordinates the French film series. "Anne Sbarge, a West Hartford Public Library patron and native of France, is the one who really jump started the idea 10-plus years ago and was instrumental in reviewing the films and doing the presentations over the years."

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"There is a special poetry and magic to hearing a foreign language, whether you fully understand it or not," Clark continued. "We have had some people who don't even know French, but they love hearing the language spoken and sharing in the culture and ideas of the film."

The library just finished up its first Spanish Film Festival that drew more than 150 participants. The series was coordinated between the library and the foreign language department at Central Connecticut State University, and consisted of viewing four films in six days. Like its original program, the festival showed Spanish films, with subtitles, followed by a discussion. Many of the films were not released or available on DVD in the States. The event drew people of all ages, including students from Central who had the opportunity to hear thoughts from older Spanish speakers who offered a different perspective.

"It is heartening to have someone return to one of these programs and bring others – co-workers, friends, parents, even grandparents – and also to witness how everyone, even newcomers, jump into the conversations," said Brenda Roggeveen, coordinator of the Hablemos de Cine program.

"I may preview the film, but I

can never accurately anticipate what the discussion emphasis might be. Everyone brings their own experience and views. There is generally very candid and open exchange on issues and ideas raised in the film. People are still talking as we close the room and head down into Blue Back Square."

One of the driving forces behind these specific language-based programs, Church said, is the fact that West Hartford is such a diverse community with many different languages spoken here. It is not uncommon, the director said, to have a family move to the area from elsewhere in the world for a time due to their job.

"Being able to do programming that speaks to these groups is a plus," Church said. "For the two to three years they live in West Hartford, it gives them an opportunity to show off their culture. It's just a win all the way around."

Church has observed in several of the post-film discussions how participants share the similarities they have from their native land. Someone from Columbia, for instance, may have a tradition similar to someone from Peru and learn that while they may call it by a different name, it is the same thing. The groups may share food as well, although perhaps preparing it differently.



Photo by Alicia B. Smith

Brenda Roggeveen coordinates the Hablemos de Cine program.

"People in general like to connect," McCue said. "Not only with language but [with] great films. It's neat they can compare and contrast what they do in different countries. It's connection."

Both programs seek to find films that will appeal to a broad audience. They are limited by what foreign films are licensed to be shown publicly. The library uses a film database, called Insta Flicks, that has films available. In the past, it has also used grant money to purchase the rights to show some films.

All of them are pre-screened to ensure there is enough material to be discussed.

The film series has been popular for those who have lost touch with a language and just want to get an

ear for it or those who want to practice their speaking skills. Church stressed that there is no pressure for anyone to talk during the discussion period.

"I'd be hesitant to participate in a conversation myself," Church said with a laugh.

The only thing missing from the Hablemos de Cine is "churos with hot coffee and chocolate during the conversations," Roggeveen said, jokingly.

Clark would enjoy baguettes, cheese and a glass of wine for the Les Francos à la Biblio. **WHL**

Information on both programs can be found on the library e-newsletter or by calling the reference desk at the Noah Webster Public Library at 860-561-6990. **WHL**

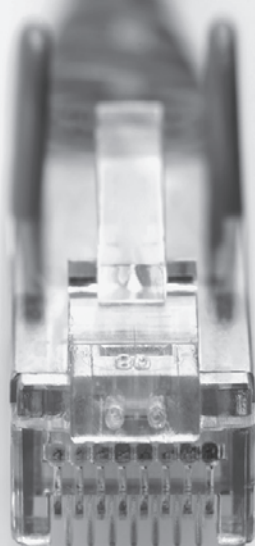
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West Hartford Center, Conn.



Photo courtesy of the Noah Webster House & West Hartford Historical Society

LIFE *long ago*

Looking back at town happenings

by Lynn Woike
Editor

Along the rear wall of a vault in the town clerk's office are records that go back to the beginning of the town's incorporation. Some oversized journals have handwritten entries. Some books are dusty. Most seem largely ignored. On their pages are the decisions, data and details that have shaped the town. Each month we will look into those volumes and provide a sampling of what was happening at different periods in time.

125 years ago: 1892

On February 29 the town borrowed \$3,500 from the U.S. Bank.

120 years ago: 1897

No one appeared for the February 8 regular meeting of the Selectmen and Sewer Commission.

110 years ago: 1907

At its February 11 meeting, the Selectmen and Sewer Commission noted that there were 256 "persons liable for military duty" with 41 of them "exempt for various reasons except in case of war, etc."



These dog tags belonged to a soldier serving in World War I.

One hundred years ago, the Town Council discussed Improvements to the post office and to investigate the feasibility of locations near the Center. In this photo, the post office is located in the same building as the town's first druggist, Allen B. Judd, who in 1880 took over the location where the main library is today.



Photos courtesy of the Noah Webster House & West Hartford Historical Society

Those who participated in World War I were given this service medal.

100 years ago: 1917

Health Officer Stadtmueller asked the Board of Finance February 1 for an increase in his budget due to the prevalence of infantile paralysis. He also desired making suitable provisions, in the near future, for an isolation hospital for the care

of contagious diseases having a preliminary expense of \$10,000–\$12,000. The need for a visiting nurse for the schools was something he thought the schools should address.

The estimated expense for elections and registrations was \$385.

Calling selectmen's salaries "inadequate for the services rendered," Mr. Dunning suggested that the first selectman be paid \$500 or \$600 and others be paid \$250 or \$300 annually.

In the February 2 meeting that adjourned at 11:15 p.m., it was voted that the Selectmen appoint 10 citizens to a committee to examine the proposed bill before the Judiciary Committee of the General Assembly to establish a town court for West Hartford and report their recommendations to the adjourned annual town meeting.

Minutes of the February 9 meeting reported, "Much time was spent in connection with the request of Governor Holcomb for a general enrollment in view of the break with Germany and the possibility of the United States being involved in the great Old World war." Eighty enumerators were charged with determining how many males lived in town and assess their fitness for military service.

Improvements to the post office's building and services were discussed February 16. It was voted that C.W. Hall, chairman of the Committee on Post Office, investigate the feasibility of locations near the Center and the matter of expenses.

On February 23, the annual military enrollment was signed, showing 1,329 residents were liable to military duty.

75 years ago: 1942

It was voted that the town manger could "appoint for a specified time as many special police, without pay, from among residents of the town of West Hartford as may be deemed

advisable for service in connection with any blackout or air raid protection measure. During the term of service of such special police they shall possess all the powers and privileges and perform all the duties of regular members of the police department ... for the protection of the public peace, health and safety ..."

50 years ago: 1967

The town manger announced at the February 14 Town Council meeting that director of public works Thaddeus Nosek was leaving for a special mission in Vietnam, in response to a request from the State Department, to oversee the construction of schools and other buildings there.

At its February 28 meeting, the Town Council heard recommendations to improve Rockledge Country Club, including fencing the entire area, removing dead trees, changing some of the rules and upgrading the club house for a total of \$133,000. The matter was referred to the council committee on parks and recreation.

25 years ago: 1992

At its February 11 meeting, the town council presented a proclamation to Eugene D. Daly of Dover Road who served on the Risk Management Advisory Board from 1984-91, thanking him for his service. The council also informed the West Hartford Housing Authority it could purchase single- and multi-family houses for the amount of taxes due on the properties, with the intent to rent them to low- and moderate-income individuals.

20 years ago: 1997

The town council approved, with final conditions, the application for CVS on South Main Street; voted to sponsor "One West Hartford! Volunteer Week" to promote volunteer opportunities in June; agreed to participate in a pilot program that would provide low-interest fixed-rate home mortgage loans to local and

The Town Council approved the drive-thru window at Kentucky Fried Chicken 20 years ago.



Photo by Lynn Woike



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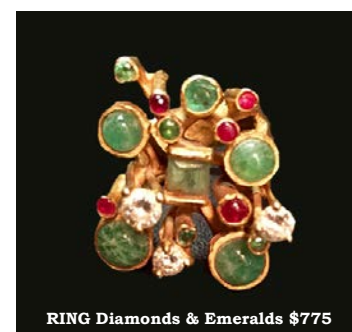
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state police officers who were CHFA eligible homebuyers and were purchasing homes in designated neighborhoods; and accepted a \$31,000 grant from the Local Law Enforcement Block Grant from the US Department of Justice to the WH PD for underwriting projects to reduce crime and improve public safety for the Community Interaction Team – all at its February 11 meeting.

On February 25, a public hearing was held on a petition to allow drive-thru window for the existing Kentucky Fried Chicken facility on New Britain Avenue and in its meeting, the council changed the zoning to permit it.

10 years ago: 2007

No one signed up to speak at a public hearing February 13 concerning Hebrew Life Choices Inc.'s application to add six units and expand the dining room and a canopy over the entrance at Summerwood on Simsbury Road. The application was approved during the regular meeting.

Also during that meeting, concerns about increasing the rates for public parking in the center were heard from residents and business owners, asking the hours not be increased and that employees be given a break. Among other things, the council changed the amount of time a quarter purchased, from 30 minutes to 15 minutes.



Photo by Lynn Wolke

Construction of the Delamar Hotel continues. It was five years ago that the town manager was directed to request proposals for a boutique hotel. The opening had been scheduled for this spring.

On February 28, a public hearing was held for an amendment to a special development district at 433 South Main Street to develop a 34,000-square-foot office building with a footprint and 71 parking spaces.

5 years ago: 2012

The Town Council unanimously approved a resolution to direct the town manager to request proposals for a boutique hotel for a piece of land it owned on Raymond Road

that had been used for back-up parking for public works and the police department before being turned into a park about five years earlier.

At its February 14 meeting, Town Manager Ron Van Winkle announced that resident El Harp had recently given a \$10,000 grant to the town through the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving to purchase a strain of elm trees that seemed to sustain itself against Dutch elm disease. In another

generous act of giving, David Charles raised more than \$10,000 to benefit the West Hartford Food Pantry.

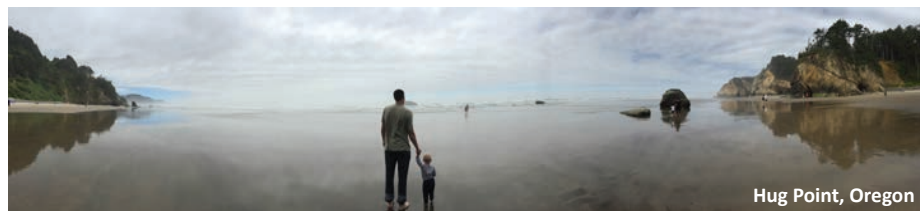
1 year ago: 2016

Town Manager Ron Van Winkle announced the town sold \$14 million in bonds at an interest rate of 2.029 percent – one of the lowest rates in decades.

The Board of Education added Chinese to the foreign language choices at the middle school. **WHL**

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Down the line

Local senior tennis team takes third in the nation

by Lynn Woike
Editor

The Senior Moment-Um tennis team, that plays at the Farmington Valley Racquet Club in Simsbury, last year placed third in the USTA National Championship held in Arizona this past October.

The team plays at the 6.0 55 and over level; there were 17 teams in this division in the tournament representing the country, including Hawaii and the Caribbean.

"To our knowledge, this is the highest a team from Connecticut – or New England – at our level has ever placed in the USTA championships," said Beth Miranda of Simsbury. "In the tennis world, it's a huge deal and it's probably the most

fun you'll have playing tennis. ... It was the experience of a lifetime."

To qualify, the team played matches against teams from Glastonbury and Torrington.

"We came out on top of our flight, then we went to sectionals held in Massachusetts. We won sectionals which allowed us to go to nationals," Miranda said.

The team's 12 players are from Avon, Farmington, Simsbury and West Hartford. Nine went to Arizona.

Although matches began on Friday, players arrived Tuesday to prepare themselves, adjusting to the time change, the weather and the court surface.

"The sun is a huge factor. ... You

use different tactics," Miranda said, explaining, for instance, you want to make your opponents look up into it to return lobbed balls.

"We play three lines of doubles," putting a pair of women in each line, based on competitiveness. "At this level, all lines are really competitive. Any of us could play in any line," she said.

On the way to the first match in October, "I played 'This Girl Is on Fire' by Alicia Keys. I thought was appropriate for that day. ... I think everyone absolutely loved it. ... I was singing it, they were singing it. There's so much camaraderie. You bond with these women," she said.

One of the tournament customs is to exchange gifts when players are

introduced before their match.

Senior Moment-Um brought boxes of saltwater taffy wrapped up with ribbons and faux leaves to represent New England.

"It's really a nice thing to do. You shake hands and get a sleeve of balls and what court to go to. ... It's very friendly until you get on the court," Miranda said.

Everyone played, but not every match.

Senior Moment-Um lost only once in the tournament; that was in the semifinals.

"The only team that beat us was Nashville, and they won it all," she said, adding, "It was a good feeling. It validates everything you worked for."

Miranda said she enjoys doubles

because she likes to be on the court with someone she can trust, someone who has her back.

She is often paired with Volker.

"We talk on the court like crazy. ... You have to figure out what they don't do as well, and capitalize on that. ... You figure it out together," Miranda said.

The team also went to nationals in 2014.

"Some of the same members were on that team, too," Miranda said, making it easier because "we knew the lay of the land."

That first time, players were nervous and a bit overwhelmed. The team came in tenth in the nation.

"We caught the bug. We realized we can do this," said Miranda, who became the team's captain this past November.

Because they placed tenth, the team had the option of splitting up or of being bumped into the next higher level of competition, and chose the latter.

After a year competing at that level without winning their flight, it was allowed to move back to the 6.0 division last year.

"This time we knew what to expect – everything from booking our hotel rooms 30 minutes after winning sectionals, to arriving on Tuesday before nationals to acclimate and practice in the heat and low humidity," said JR McDaniel of West Hartford, who was co-captain

at the time, but has since had to give up playing tennis due to back surgery. "We set our sights high and knew we would improve over our prior showing. We cannot begin to tell you how excited we were to win third place. We worked hard and felt we deserved it."

The third-place finish gave them the same option, and they again opted to stay together and advance to the 7.0 level.

While hard work is important, members also credit their friendship on and off the court for their success.

member Susan DePatie.

The year before, she said, the team had done well at the regional level and that if it buckled down and brought on a coach, they would win the regionals and get to the nationals.

"The year before we had him do clinics, we had a lot of injured players," she said. "Under his guidance, we steadily improved and our tennis IQs improved dramatically. Once we were at sectionals and nationals, he scouted the competition, constructed practices and strategies to focus the team and

exercise. I tried to do aerobics and I blew out a knee. I [play tennis] a couple of times a week and it keeps me young."

Practice is twice a week and is comprised of drills planned by Gerhart.

"He's very good at what he does," Miranda said. "We practice hard and we play our matches hard."

Knee and elbow braces are common among players.

For McDaniel, there were also crutches and casts. Although she's been to nationals twice, she was unable to play both times. In 2014, she was on crutches and about to have back surgery. Once recovered from that, she tore two tendons and was in a cast, then had back surgery again last year, this time for a herniated disk. Two weeks later, she was at nationals, handling administrative tasks.

While it was an emotional decision, she said she's stepped away from the team because of her inability to play tennis.

"Our motto has always been, 'Let's be drama free.' I think we're really successful at doing that," McDaniel said.

With her leaving, and Gigi Kotler moving, some new players have been recruited.

"We're sisters forever. We'll see what happens and what we do at this level," Miranda said, noting, "We're much stronger than we were." **WHL**

"We are all very good friends. We not only play tennis together, but we socialize with each other during the year. We simply click as a group on and off the court."

—Beth Miranda

McDaniel said, "We are all very good friends. We not only play tennis together, but we socialize with each other during the year. We simply click as a group on and off the court. With our sights set on nationals, we were unstoppable."


In addition to the dedication the players showed all season, McDaniel also credits the team's coach, Jeff Gerhart, who has been coaching them since the beginning of 2013. He is the husband of team

motivated everyone."

Players hope their story will inspire other women in their mid 50s and beyond to compete

"I've been involved in seniors for six years," said Miranda, who never played in high school or college, picking up the game about 16 years ago.

"I love the people. I love the women. I love the competition. I love to be out there. Like anyone else, I want to win. ... It's my



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Bugs, who has not yet had his first birthday, is active, curious and loveable. He was one of four siblings rescued with their mother. His mother and one sibling have found homes, but Bugs and his brothers are still waiting. One of his favorite activities is to chase the string dangled in front of him. For more information or to adopt Bugs or his brothers, call AFOC at 860-827-0381.

Bruce

Bruce is a handsome 2-year-old male Australian Cattle Dog mix who was found wearing a Batman collar but no form of identification. Like the winged crusader, Bruce is intelligent, rugged, athletic and clever. He is also very social and outgoing. Bruce has the working dog personality, and has been evaluated by a member of an Australian Cattle Dog rescue. Daily walks and squeaky toy play time are two of his favorite things. An active family is a must and one that understands the nature of his breed and will maintain his intellectual level of training. Bruce has a higher doggie dominance level, and for now, he would benefit from being the only dog in the household. **WHL**

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Writer's block

Some assembly required

by Lynn Woike
Editor



The adage claims that a picture is worth 1,000 words. I write for a living and I can tell you that's not true in every case, especially when referring to the instructions that came with the platform bed I bought from Ikea. The 36-page manual contained exactly 11 words: "Brimnes," which is the name of the bed, the company's name three times, "design and quality," "of Sweden" and "systems."

The rest of the booklet was comprised of pictures. Pictures of the only three tools needed, the hardware it comes with, and such helpful hints as placing a rug beneath the pieces being assembled, working with another person, and not stepping into the drawer.

These simple line drawings give a false sense of security as they depict the 45 steps needed to assemble the platform with the drawers. Some of these steps contain as many as seven pictures.

And that was just the platform. There were another eight pictured steps to assemble the 74 pieces that comprised the slat foundation that would hold up the mattress and 26 sets of pictures to assemble the headboard with side shelves.

When I was told Ikea could not send an assembly crew with items delivered from the warehouse, a sisterfriend was confident the two of us could put it together in about five hours. After seven hours over two nights, I had eight broken fingernails, three of which bled, a sore foot from pieces falling on it and one partial meltdown when the drawers wouldn't fit.

My friend and I passed

every relationship test: cooperation, communication, endurance, respect, intuition, gratitude, the talent to both screw and unscrew, and the ability to agree on which rules to break. We had called the Swedish furniture monolith more names than the number of tiny flat head screws that did not hold the pieces together as illustrated, and summoned the wrath of the Norse God Odin because the instructions could not pass the basic tests of clarity and comprehension.

It took a desperate plea to my neighbor's boyfriend for help as he tried to leave at 10 p.m. on Saturday night, only to be confronted in the back entryway by a broken women, aching from sleeping on the couch for three nights, wearing the same clothes as the day before because she couldn't get to her closet with all the boxes, a forgotten knife in her hand from cutting open a package.

It was he who, in about five minutes, deduced the problem had occurred in steps two and three because in the illustrated instructions the gray metal tracks were indecipherable from the white metal tracks.

The trouble was we were now on step 53.

The solution required crawling under the bed that

already had the mattress on it to remove the four white tracks and replacing them with the four gray tracks already on the four drawers.

The picture on page two of the manual showing a confused person calling Ikea was no help because nowhere could I find a phone number to call for help.

Turning to Google, I did find a wonderful YouTube video of my bed being made, only it skipped over the drawer part, explaining it was "just like building the dresser drawers." I also found Hikea, a YouTube channel with two episodes showing people assembling various pieces of Ikea furniture while blasted out of their minds on various illegal drugs. While they were enjoying the experience way more than I was, the videos offered me no solutions.

I wanted words. Labels. Maybe even some color coding. I wanted to know which side was up, and the difference between the piece on the right and the piece on the left.

I have assembled a six-room Barbie Dream House in less time with less frustration and fewer leftover pieces.

You can be sure that when it comes time to buying my next piece of furniture, it will come fully assembled. **WHL**



Photos by Lynn Woike

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BY MARK DIXON
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Fog in the winter

Freezing Fog, also known as Ice Fog, is something we have to contend with at times, here in Connecticut. But what exactly is it?

Well first, and most basically, let's examine 'fog'... it can form in a variety of ways. Often it develops on a night with a clear sky and a calm wind – this is radiation fog –

when the Earth cools to a temperature that water vapor condenses as the temperature gets close to, or meets the dew point (the air becomes saturated). Also, there is 'advection' fog ... when warm, moist air moves over a colder surface, such as snow (this can happen even when there is wind), or even the colder water of Long Island

Sound. Water droplets suspended in the air, reduce visibility – when dense, it could drop to less than a quarter of a mile, greatly impacting travel.

So next, to qualify as 'freezing' fog – it's all about the surface temperature. When it is below freezing (32 degrees Fahrenheit), those water droplets that make up fog

freeze on contact. As this happens, untreated surfaces can become very slick, especially those surfaces that are elevated, like bridges and overpasses.

This month's article was in response to a reader and viewer's inquiry. If you have a suggestion for a topic to be addressed, or a question, send me an email at mdixon@wfsb.com **WHL**

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EYEWITNESS NEWS 3

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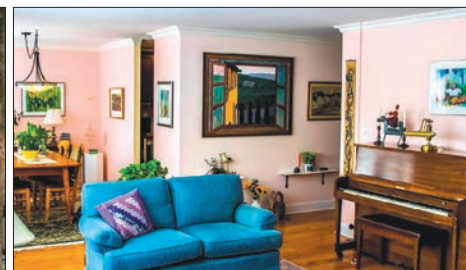
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